



SIR ISAAC PITMAN,  
INVENTOR OF PHONOGRAPHY.

*Born, 4th January 1813. Died, 22nd January 1897.*

# REPORTERS AND REPORTING.

*An Exposition of Sir Isaac Pitman's Phonographic  
Art of Short-hand Reporting in its  
Technical, Intellectual and Ethical  
aspects from standard works.*

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

D. E. WACHA.

*Reporting is rightly coming to be regarded more and more as a profession in itself and worthy of the best talent that can be devoted to it.....The reporter's work is worthy the best powers even of a Macaulay. Indeed, the reporter should be a local Macaulay.....For such reporters, there is an ever-increasing demand.*

*E. L. Shuman.*

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*There is no place on present day newspapers for the incompetent and the unreliable reporters. Not only must they be fully qualified for that work but they must be gentlemen who can be always depended upon.*

*Alexander Patison.*

*In connection with short-hand writing, there is not only the work of the inventor but the skill of the individual and the marvel lay in the manner in which the spoken sounds were received by the ear, transmitted to the brain, sent in phonographic form along the nerves of the fingers, and transferred so rapidly to paper that it was possible to reproduce a speech exactly as uttered.*

*J. Allanson Picton.*

*The mere mechanical short-hand writer is, however, by no means what is required. He must combine, with his rapid note, the power of rendering, without hesitation or delay, an intelligent transcript properly punctuated and distinctly re-written. It may seem a simple matter to transcribe what is taken down verbatim ; but, as a matter of fact, it is necessary to keep a vigilant watch on the sense of what is being written, as many of our English words are so treacherously alike, both in sound and phonetical conformation, that most important and serious mistakes may be made, especially where technical words and numbers are extensively used, if the writer is not careful to avoid " jumping at conclusions."*

*( Public Opinion. )*

*I have always valued short-hand.....as an educational agent. I believe that short-hand, rightly used, forms so valuable an aid to the acquisition of knowledge and the promotion of mental culture that it ought to find a place in the curriculum of every school and college in the land. It has a further claim to recognition in having opened up a vast field of useful employment to the rising generation at a time when the struggle for existence is perhaps keener and more engrossing than ever. There are many men and women who are now earning a good living by the use of short-hand ; and who, without its aid, might have found the struggle a vain and a hopeless one. I am not thinking so much of professional short-hand writers and reporters, who, of course, are the most accomplished experts in the art, as of the army of clerks and amanuenses, who every hour of every day are saving the valuable time of their employers by the skill and rapidity with which they perform the vast amount of clerical work which the exigencies of modern commercial and literary life have made an absolute necessity.*

*T. A. Reed.*





*I believe that 100 years ago we would have got on tolerably well without short-hand, and did get on tolerably well; but at this moment, suppose we can fancy by any autocratic and natural power the suspension of short-hand throughout the natural world for even a week, I want to know how the universe would get on under circumstances of that kind. (Lord Rosebery.)*

## INTRODUCTION.

In presenting to the Indian public the following collection of extracts on the art of short-hand writing and reporting, the compiler claims no originality whatever. A student of phonic writing and literature, it occurred to him that it would not be amiss to focus many of the salient, interesting and instructive facts in connection with this modern art, which the genius of the Nineteenth Century, so prolific in other departments of human knowledge, practical and scientific, has been able to develop and perfect in a remarkable degree. To the English members of the profession, there is nothing new in the collection to interest them or excite their curiosity. The extracts have been solely compiled with the object of rivetting the attention of Indian gentlemen who have been pursuing the vocation of short-hand writers and reporters, as also of the Bench and the Bar, the Legislator, the Municipal Councillor and the platform speaker. It has been said on numerous occasions that, however patient and industrious the Indian reporter may be, he is seldom known to possess that great intelligence and liberal culture which are to be noticed among the brethren of his profession in England. But if he sadly lacks that intelligence and culture, the blame cannot be wholly laid at his door. We are not aware of

any special schools in any part of the country where a systematic course of instruction is given in short-hand writing and reporting. In fact there is no school in the proper sense of the word which practically trains Indian youths to follow this profession which is as learned and honourable as that of law or medicine or engineer or editor. In some of the capital cities and towns there are a few classes where the art is taught. And more or less, the efficiency of the handful of this class of professionals who are to be found in these places, entirely depends on their own natural intelligence, assiduity and perseverance. Indeed, reporting as an art is unknown in the country save in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. Here and there, in other parts of the country, there may be a *cucha* person who passes off as a short-hand writer and reporter. The class of really capable, competent and cultured reporters has yet to spring up in India. At present, it must be said to be almost non-existent. One great reason for this condition of affairs may be safely attributed to the lamentable lack of literary and other activity in the country. There are no literary or other organisations worth speaking of. Public meetings are rare, we mean meetings attended by hundreds, let alone thousands. These, again, are mostly confined to the capital cities. All other parts of India are in this respect so many sleepy hollows. Moreover, we have no institutions like Parliament which, in England, is the greatest of training schools for accurate and highly cultured reporting. There is the Imperial Legislative Council. But reporting the speeches made thereat is almost a rarity. Manuscript eloquence is more or less in evidence. Members, from the Viceroy downwards, bring their speeches ready written and prepared. Each delivers it, though some, impatient with this procedure, orally repeat it. *Extempore* speeches are few and far between. Thus the official reporter's labour is greatly lightened. The more of such manuscript eloquence, the less is his practice in the art of accurate reporting. The same remarks would apply to Provincial Legislative Councils which sit out for perhaps six or twelve hours at a maximum (even if so much)

during a whole year. The only meetings where the reporter's ability can be fairly tested are those held by the City Corporations which meet either weekly, fortnightly or monthly. The Bombay Municipal Corporation, it is well-known, is the only one which has generally bi-weekly meetings extending for two hours where a variety of *extempore* eloquence finds full vent. Of course, there are meetings during a season when Convocations and other academical institutions have their annual field-day. So, too, with meetings of public societies. Lastly, there are the platform speeches made by ardent orators at Congresses and Conferences. It will be thus apparent that the scope of those who follow the profession of reporters in India is exceedingly limited. It is scarcely a profession which attracts literary youths as it does in the United Kingdom. A first-class reporter there has many a chance of rising to distinction and occupying the editorial chair of a provincial or London paper. How many indeed are instances of distinguished men and members of Parliament who began their career as reporters?

Such being the case, there is nothing to be surprised at the complaints sometimes heard from English gentlemen of the inefficient or incompetent reporting appearing in Indian journals. For example, there is Mr. W. S. Caine, M. P. We single him out as he has often been to India, has been present at very large meetings, and has frequently addressed them or other audiences. The late Dr. Ranay grumbled when he was in Australia that he was miserably reported. Mr. Caine, in one of those bright letters with which he used to enliven his Indian clientele in the columns of a Calcutta journal, on topics connected with his last visit to India, (1896-97) has referred to the want of proficiency of Indian reporters. Two or three Municipal Commissioners in the past have also been heard complaining of misreporting. Sometimes the very opposite of what they said was reported which, no doubt, vexed their official souls. And the non-official speakers have been treated similarly. All this, it may be repeated, is owing to want of proper preparatory training. Here and there a reporter, with some

pretence to liberal education has done well. But such individuals are rather exceptions who prove the rule. When to want of adequate training is combined insufficiency of culture, the result cannot be otherwise than what is generally to be seen. This then, briefly, may be said to be the present condition of reporting in India by Indians. It cannot be said that the reporting of Englishmen in the country is much better. No doubt there is a difference in the quality ; but not to an appreciable degree. In Bombay at least, during a period extending over thirty years and more, only two English reporters have been known to have answered the ideal. It has been said that in Calcutta the reporting is even more inefficient than in Bombay. And yet there is at present an accomplished Indian reporter in Madras, who has carved a name for himself for his accurate and intelligent reporting and who has now and again acted as the official reporter of the Congress.

In the United Kingdom and America reporting, of course, has been carried out to perfection. One well-known professional gentleman, who thoroughly appreciates the value of our modern reporter, has placed the following testimony on record. "If all the feelings of a patriot glow in our bosom on a perusal of those eloquent speeches which are delivered in the Senate, or in those public assemblies where the people are frequently convened to exercise the birth-right of Britons, we owe it to short-hand : \* \* all those brilliant and spirit-stirring effusions which the circumstances of the present time combine to draw forth, and which the press transmits to us with such astonishing celerity, warm from the lips and instinct with the soul of the speaker, would have been entirely lost to posterity, and comparatively little known to ourselves, had it not been for the facilities afforded to their preservation by short-hand." This writer further proceeds to impress on us what a calamity might there be were the operations of the reporters suspended awhile or were they to go on strike after the manner of the engineers four years ago ! He describes the result : "a blank would be left in the political and judicial

history of our country, an impulse would be wanting to the public mind, and the nation would be taught to feel and acknowledge the important purpose it answers in the great business of life." Such is the value of the short-hand reporter. Whether the science of the future will supersede him by some marvellous recording instrument, it is not possible to say. But till he is so superseded, no doubt, the reporter is as essential to modern life as the newspaper itself at the breakfast table.

It will be entirely out of place in this compilation to trace the rise and progress of phonography. Suffice it to say that its origin dates with the accession of Queen Victoria to the English throne. The sixty-four years which have since rolled by tell their own marvellous tale of the progress during the interval. But those who may be curious to acquaint themselves with it may read the graphic account given in the *Phonetic Journal* on the occasion of the sexagenary of Phonography in the year of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. To Sir Isaac Pitman first, and to Mr. Allen Reed next, both gone to their last resting place since 1897, the art owes its present perfection.

The aim and object of this compilation is, firstly, to popularise phonography and infuse a literary spirit among such of our young men who, instead of becoming clerks, would aspire to take some independent and honourable profession which may not be yet over-crowded. Secondly, to place before the public at large the difficulties of a proficient reporter and the great drawbacks from which the inefficient and uncultured suffers. Incidentally, the compilation also acquaints the reader with some of the vices and malpractices in which partisan or malignant reporters indulge. At the same time he will find instances of the honest and competent reporter who often improves the speeches he reports or condenses. In short, the compilation brings into a focus all that is worth knowing about reporting, including its strong and weak points.

Having thus pointed out the aim and object of the compilation, it may be just as well to refer to the more salient extracts illus-

trative of reporting in general. First and foremost, it should be well borne in mind that there is an important difference between mere short-hand writers and reporters. It is generally assumed that they are one and the same. In a sense they are: for both write short-hand. But a great authority observes that while the short-hand reporter is a mere "word-taker," the reporter, who thoroughly understands his vocation, is something more. The latter is supposed to mentally edit and revise the speech he is reporting. While the hand is moving, the brain, too, is concentrated on the matter of the speech. Thus the quantitative and the qualitative processes have to be carefully and discreetly combined and condensed by the reporter who knows his business thoroughly. Says Mr. J. F. Scott: "A man may make an indifferent speech so far as language is concerned (and that is a most important element) but replete with excellent matter which it is the province of the reporter to judiciously condense, to improve, and, in fact, to render intelligible." Unfortunately, Indian experience is discouraging in this respect. It is a rare event to see a reporter, or one who presumes to follow the vocation, so judiciously condensing and improving a speech as not only to make it intelligible, but convey to the reader the correct meaning and arguments of the speaker. Ten to one, he breaks down in the process. Owing, chiefly, to his want of extensive knowledge and culture, he is not able to follow the speaker, and instinctively catch his salient points. To do so argues high mental powers and constant exercise. But this is rarely seen in an Indian reporter. More or less, he flounders in the mire and commits most egregious errors.

On this important function of the reporter, it may be instructive to quote here a few observations of Mr. Allan Reed, the *premier* reporter who died about two years ago and who had come out three times to this country as the official reporter for the Indian National Congress, and once for the Government of India during the sitting of the Opium Commission. Correct reporting and condensing are a mental exercise of a severe character. "To

perform his work efficiently he must bring his mind," says Mr. Reed, "to bear on this also, and not only endeavour to understand the general drift of what he is reporting, but to catch the meaning of every expression." Sometimes ridiculous mistakes are made owing to hearing of half sounds. Hence, says Mr. Reed, "the necessity for listening to the sense as well as to the sounds of words." An example is given how a reporter blundered in a proper name while reporting a speech from the pulpit. The clergyman used the phrase: "the seige of Abimalik" which was actually written and printed as "the seige of Limerick." A cultured reporter with knowledge could never have committed the mistake. It could not have made sense and fitted with the context. Mr. Reed offers the following sage observation on errors of this nature. "Every experienced reporter must have occasionally discovered error of this description while transcribing his notes; *his inattention to the sense* while following the speaker not having led him to correct the false impression which has been made on the ear." Thus the utility of *mental exercise* in the matter of reporting is very great indeed. He who continually exercises the mental faculty eventually becomes a most accurate and efficient reporter. Mr. Reed properly observes: "a talent is thus cultivated of separating mere verbiage from the solid material, winnowing the chaff from the wheat."

After this, it will be obvious to the reader that good natural ability and education are highly essential for a good reporter. This is what the same high authority says. "Properly to fulfil the duties of a reporter requires good natural abilities, and, to say the least, a tolerably good education." In India, it is to be feared, that the handful of reporters we have in our midst are sadly wanting in these essential qualifications. There may be an exception here and an exception there. In Bombay itself, it can only be averred of one native reporter who has been in the profession for upwards of forty years, possessing the competency referred to. Hence Mr. Reed rightly observes that "persons not possessed of these advantages, would, as a rule be



ill-prepared to meet the exigencies of a reporter's life." There is a great difference between *amateur* reporting persons who for want of other vocation, take it up as a matter of a chance (and this is unfortunately the case with almost all reporters in India) and *professional* reporting. The latter, says Mr. Reed, may be made "a pleasing pursuit," and will be found useful to all who practise it with moderate care and industry; the former can never be followed by an uneducated person "without discredit to himself and his employers; for even if by means of considerable practice, he should acquire a fair amount of stenographic power, he will always be liable to blunders of the most absurd character in the transcription of his notes for the press." This statement many of us can certainly verify from long experience. Mr. Reed further pursues the subject in the following strain. "Imagine a dull uninformed person taking his seat at a reporters' table to take notes of a scientific lecture, rapidly delivered, and abounding in difficult words \* \* \* or suppose him to report an historical address, full of proper names of which he knows as much as his note-book. It is true that a well informed reporter will, at times, be at a loss in such matters, but he will have sense enough to omit what is doubtful or obscure or will know the books which he can refer in order to rectify errors or supply omissions. Not so the other; unaware of the extent of his own ignorance, totally unconscious of his mistakes, he will blunder through the notes, and present his readers with a mass of unconnected sentences completely bewildering to an ordinary intellect—a caricature rather than a faithful representation of the speaker's words."

But apart from a cultivated sense of hearing, a good reporter must have certain well-defined qualifications. It is not necessary that he should be a University man, though such a person, with other needed qualifications, may make a better reporter. But experience has shewn that it is not always so. Great stress, however, is laid on those who have a fair knowledge of Latin and French. As to the first, time there was when it was considered a sign

of great erudition to be able on an appropriate occasion to intersperse classic quotations in an eloquent speech. But it may be observed that since 1880, the practice of such quotations has greatly declined, so much so that hardly even the most scholarly member makes use of Latin phrases in his speech. With the change in the style of our heavy quarterlies and solid magazines, there has also been a corresponding change in the quality of speeches, whether in Parliament or out of Parliament. For instance, take any of the recent speeches of Mr. Morley or Sir William Harcourt or Mr. Balfour. You will hardly find a single Latin quotation, much less a Latin allusion. Then, take again the speeches of Lord Rosebery who, by universal consent, is called the "public orator of the empire." In this respect, the latter days of the Victorian era appear in marked contrast with the Augustan age of Queen Anne.

As to French, however, it may be said that it is the *lingua franca* of the Continent and every reporter is bound to have a fair acquaintance with it. There should be no surprise if, beside French, public exigencies by and by demand German. So much is now-a-days said and written about commercial and technical education, and about German manufactures and things "made in Germany" that the German language must soon become a *sine qua non* for aspirants to high reporting. But what may be essential for reporting purpose in the United Kingdom and the United States is not necessarily essential for reporters in India. It will be a long time before newspaper proprietors will demand a knowledge of French and German from their reporters. But, at any rate, English reporters in India would do well to learn Hindustani which can be spoken and understood in all parts of the country; while a good knowledge of the principal local vernacular languages may be an additional qualification. It is no small gain to them, when they go about inspecting famine-stricken or plague-afflicted localities to be able to fluently converse in the vernacular. As to Indian reporters, for some years to come, a sound knowledge of English is the first requisite.

But with it he must possess sufficient historical information. Mr. Reed observes that "one of the most important branches of knowledge which the reporter can cultivate is history."

Another requisite for the intelligent reporter is to be *au courant* with the political and other problems of the day. Mr. Reed observes:—"especially should a reporter be cognisant of the important events passing around him, in his own and other countries \* \* Allusions to passing events at home and abroad, are so frequent in public addresses of all kinds, especially in those of a political character, that a reporter would be continually at fault who should not be familiar with them." There could be no question as to the soundness of this advice. Indian reporters, it must be said to our regret, are woefully deficient in this respect. As a matter of fact our experience of the majority is that they hardly know the trend even of local topics of importance. Hence, sometimes, serious blemishes are manifest in their report. At meetings of City Municipalities, reporters are generally at sea when following experts on drainage or water questions, on finance and taxation, public health and other large questions of sanitation and conservancy. No doubt they are industrious and anxious to take down a faithful report; but, unfortunately their knowledge of all such topics is so imperfect and deficient that it is not possible to expect any thing like a rational and coherent report. It may be well imagined the result of their hour's labour at a public meeting when broad foreign politics or higher educational or social and religious problems are discussed, when their knowledge of local subjects is so limited. The fault lies in the grounding. As we have already observed, there are no *trained* reporters in this country. This is the great desideratum. Grounding comes of sound education but it is doubtful whether even one tenth of those, who do duty as reporters to newspapers, English or Vernacular, have the necessary grounding. In short, they are in no sense contemporary historians which in reality they ought to be. To meet with a well-trained and all-round well-informed Indian reporter is a

great pleasure. One can learn many a thing from him and feel glad of an interchange of thoughts on current topics. Unfortunately this is seldom the case. Our reporters are generally immature fledglings. Mr. Reed is so anxious of the reputation of the reporter of his ideal ( and which is a practical one ) that he says that a reporter being " a contemporary historian himself it would be positively shameful if he suffered himself to be ignorant of the history of the world beyond his own immediate locality."

But we have not yet done with the qualifications of the reporter. Not only he should be well versed in the history of the world, but he must have fair acquaintance with law courts, their procedure, the merits of the case they have to report upon and so forth. Here, therefore, some knowledge of legal jurisprudence is essential. In order to be able to furnish accurate and intelligible reports, " it is necessary," remarks the same high authority, " that they should understand somewhat of the forms of legal proceedings, and the principal technical terms employed in connexion with them."

All these are mental qualifications. And he who wants to be known as a well informed and accurate reporter must be well equipped in them. But he should have also a strong faculty of hearing and an intuitive knack to catch the sense of the speaker. It should be remembered that physiology has not a little to do with our ideal or model reporter. The best of the class would somewhat suffer in accuracy for want of the necessary sense of correct hearing. Hearing is as essential to reporting as sight and " it goes without saying that a deaf reporter is an impossibility." Mr. Reed's advice is that no one who suffers habitually from deafness need think of following the vocation of a reporter. Deafness is a positive disqualification. But apart from it, even for the reporter with a sound sense of hearing, it is highly essential to cultivate the auditory faculty. At a lecture delivered, say fully eight years since, by Dr. Edward Gray of Oxford, before the London Phonetic Short-hand Writers' Association, he went into a scientific disquisi-

tion on the relation of the human brain to the ear, specially in the case of the reporter. There are processes going forward, unsuspectedly in the brain of a phonographer as he plies his art. He observed how few realise "the many *mechanical* processes which intervene between the bit of flat steel-sheeting and the finished pen. Fewer still have any notion of the *cerebral*, many and complex, silent and swift, which take place in the brief moment of time between the entrance of spoken sounds into our ears and the emergence from our fingers of the symbols into which the heard sounds have been transformed \* \* \* The subject involves one of the most difficult and intricate problems in brain physiology." For those scientifically inclined, a further description of this relation between the brain and sense of hearing will be found in *The Phonotic Journal* for 16th December 1893—P. 787, illustrated by diagrams.

Lastly, the reporter must have a good physique. The calls on a first class reporter in London are indeed many and the nature of the work he has to go through in a day is not only arduous but various. But it seldom falls to the lot of an average Indian reporter the quantity and quality demanded of his professional brother in the world's metropolis. None but physically capable of undergoing bodily fatigue, consequent on consecutive hard work for six hours and more should embrace this profession. For instance, a reporter who takes full notes of a meeting or a trial for such a length of time, without intermission, has indeed a trying exercise of the mental faculties. Says Mr. Reed: "it is a severe task for the bodily powers to which no man would be equal who did not possess the *mens sana in corpore sano*." Indian reporters have hardly the experience of the sheer physical work, let alone the mental, devolving on reporters in London during the busy season when a variety of political, social and miscellaneous functions take place in different localities during a working day. The occasions when they are called upon to work fourteen or fifteen hours a day are altogether unknown in India. Even at meetings like those of the Legislative Council or of Conferences and Congresses, the

longest time scarcely goes beyond six hours. Even then, some of their work comes ready prepared to hand owing to the general practice of most of the speakers writing out their speeches beforehand. The saving, both of physical and mental work, under such circumstances, is considerable. There is no manner of comparison, therefore, between the so-called hard work an Indian reporter undergoes on what he may call his longest work day and the hardest which the stalwart English reporters in London have to go through, almost day after day in the busy season. Here is Mr. Reed's estimate of that work. "In busy season many reporters work fourteen or fifteen hours a day, and if this is continued for weeks together, with occasional sitting up through the night, even a robust constitution will have to summon all its power of endurance to its aid." It should be remembered here that the kind of hard night work which Parliamentary reporters have to perform during the busiest part of a session of the House of Commons is entirely unknown to the Indian reporter. But enough now has been said as to the quality and quantity of the physical work an English reporter has to go through to convince the reader of the powers of endurance required of an Indian reporter if he is ever called upon to do corresponding job in this country. The type of such a reporter is altogether non-existent at present and perhaps will be so for the next half a century.

Mr. Reed does not forget caligraphy as one of the necessary qualifications of a good and careful reporter. A clear and legible style of long-hand writing is essential. "This is of greater importance than is generally imagined," says that eminent authority. "Very many reporters write an ugly and illegible scrawl." As a result printers have a great difficulty to decipher the "copy" of a bad caligraphist. These often expect to be paid, and often are paid more for setting from a bad "copy" than from clear.

A good "all-round man" is the kind of reporter most in requisition at any first class press. But this tribe is rare. Mr. Reed says he has found very few of them in his long experience, men who are accomplished short-hand writers, who can condense well and

write a descriptive article with facility, men who are thoroughly trustworthy, of temperate habits, and gentlemanly bearing. Of course, it is hopeless to expect even a single reporter of this superior standard in India when he is such a rarity in London.

We may now turn to another part of the subject. It is the sound practical advice which experienced reporters have given to their juniors. Mr. Reed observes that every short-hand writer who has the honourable ambition to rise to the dignity of an accomplished reporter must rise above the *mere mechanism* of the art he practises. As in every other profession, be it painting, music, sculpture, architecture and so forth, so in short-hand reporting, mechanical exercise is absolutely valueless. "The mere mechanician, if he succeed at all in his professional work, will be and remain at the bottom of the tree. It may seem to others a pity that the work should be undertaken by the ill-educated and slenderly endowed, and in a sense it is so but we must take things as they are. Our ranks, it is true, like those of other professions, contain a certain proportion of dullards who do no credit to us or themselves. But this will not invalidate the proposition that I am going to lay down—that the study and practice of short-hand are calculated to stimulate the mental faculties (where they exist) and may be made the means of an admirable intellectual discipline."

Given a professional short-hand writer who is extensively read in general literature, history, and so forth, he should strive his best to turn out satisfactory work. The principal point he has to bear constantly in mind is to follow the ideas as well as the language of the speaker—a task by no means easy but which must come handy to the regular, methodical and practised reporter. Where the subject is simple there is not much of a difficulty. The task of the stenographer is immensely increased when he has a special subject to report and when the speaker has his own idiosyncrasies of language and delivery. If the speaker is a fast one who runs away with the torrents of his words, the work is indeed most troublesome. But the more that such a speaker's utterances

are accurately reported the greater is the proficiency of the reporter and his reputation. "The serious part of the matter is" says our standard authority, "to follow the train of thought, to understand the unfamiliar allusions, to see what your man is driving at, for if you fail in this, your report, whether full or condensed, will probably be imperfect and foggy, if not absurd \* \* It may often be needful to consult, if there is time, books of reference for the purpose of clearing up ambiguities, or supplying deficiencies." But the importance of such a library may be gathered from what Mr. Reed says—he who was known for years as the *premier* reporter of England. "I dare not say how many encyclopædias, and histories, and gazetteers and dictionaries (technical and otherwise) and concordances I have had occasion to explore in quest of information that I had not possessed to enable me to transcribe accurately some short-hand notes that, from the speaker's fault or mine, were hazy and unintelligible or perhaps in search of the name of a person or a city that had entirely escaped my memory, even if it had a place there. No reporter, however well informed, can be independent of such aid, and in seeking it he is adding to his knowledge and cultivating his intellectual powers." It is to be feared the Indian reporters are few who constantly seek knowledge and cultivate their intellectual powers. Most of them have such an imperfect grounding that perhaps, the effort is beyond their limited capacity.

Mr. Reed's next counsel is that the reporter must persistently make an effort to improve his style of composition. If nothing else, the constant practice of hearing the best public speakers should afford him models of style. Here, too, his work must be mental and not mechanical. The accomplished reporter, who himself is a fair master of style oftener than not does grateful service to bad speakers by putting their slipshod or ungrammatical or uncouth and involved utterances in better dress. Thus it will be seen that an inefficient reporter is liable to make a mess of a bad speech—make it a complete bathos—as an efficient



reporter is prone to improve it and make it read better than delivered by its speaker.

Next, reporters are enjoined to write sense but not to write by sound, though sound in the first instance is the foundation of the stenographer. Mr. Reed defends his profession from those superior persons who sometimes set up as critics, notably lawyers, and try to cast a slur upon the work of reporters. Mr. Reed's most effective reply to this class of captious persons is very pertinent. "I suppose you write by sound, and not by sense," is the sneering tone in which the superior person questions the reporter. For such, Mr. Reed's answer is as follows:—"True, I write by sound; whether I write sense depends upon whether there is any sense to write. If the sounds convey sense, I write sense; if they convey nonsense, I write nonsense." He expounds this more clearly as follows:—"The reporter has a great deal more to do than take down sounds; but this is his first task, and unless he has an extraordinary memory, he can no more do his work without this preliminary than an artist can produce a picture without paint and brush and canvas. The words are his raw material, which requires more or less manipulation before attaining its ultimate shape; and the reporter's success largely depends upon the skill which he manifests in the manipulative or formative process. It is his business to grasp the sense of the words which he writes. If they fitly express that sense his task is a light one. If they are clumsily put together, he has to put them in a more comely form, to fill up gaps, to remove excrescences, to round off angularities, and if necessary add a little polish." Here we may all appreciate the work which a good reporter does with a bad speech. As a rule, bad speakers have to thank this class of reporters who dress up their speeches instead of allowing to appear them in their unintelligible nakedness.

A reporter, if he is to rise in his profession and add to his reputation, should cultivate his faculty so as to seize, almost intuitively, upon the essential features of a

have an intuitive perception of the relative value of words with all their shades of meaning, so that he may be able to employ just that particular word which should convey to the reader the exact sense and meaning of the original. With this faculty must be combined the gift of facile expression and natural and correct arrangement.

It not infrequently happens that, while hard pressed by a fluent speaker on a subject which is not quite familiar to the reporter, that in spite of all his skill and experience he gets himself so busy with the idea of accurate reporting that he is not able to follow the line of thought of the speaker. It is alleged that it is not possible for the experienced reporter to be both accurate and at the same time correct as to the *sense* of the subject. He has no brain power left to attend to the two irksome functions simultaneously. Mr. Reed's experience goes to disprove the statement. In his opinion the process is easier than imagined and can be successfully carried out. "Under ordinary circumstances an efficient stenographer finds that his practice of note taking," Mr. Reed observes, "is *no* obstacle to his mental apprehension of the spoken words but in some cases absolutely assists to grasp their true meaning. He is compelled to listen with great care, to concentrate his attention upon the words and sentences as they fall from the speaker's lips, and not allow himself to be diverted from his task; his ear is a cultivated one through his habit of note taking, and, in spite of the disadvantage of not being able to look at the speaker, he catches many words that would escape casual listener; and if he knows that he has to give, not perhaps a verbatim, but a condensed account of what is said, he has the strongest reason for endeavouring to seize the points as they arise. \* \* The trained and conscientious reporter, as a rule, follows the *sense* as well as the sound; if not, he pays the penalty of falling into many a pitfall."

In fact, the more one carefully considers the several qualifications needed in a competent reporter, the more the statement of Mr.

Reed gets accentuated that he must be an all-round man, well trained, well grounded and well cultured. Indeed we may say that he should be omnicultured. Thus, without the several specialities already referred to, it is not possible to expect a condensed speech from a reporter which preserves the colour, tone and temper of the speaker. Hence condensation becomes an art, and a most refined art. "If a meeting," says our authority, "has to be condensed to one-half or two-thirds of the length of a verbatim report, a judicious reporter should be able to give his readers all the facts and arguments adduced very much in the words of the speakers themselves, omitting only the repetitions and the unnecessary verbiage which characterise the great majority of spoken addresses. "But the task of a reporter to condense becomes not a little formidable when he has to manipulate a verbose speech. The retention of what may be considered absolutely relevant to the subject and the rejection of the irrelevant, pure verbiage, is no easy task. Here the culture of the reporter comes greatly to his aid and differentiates him from the less learned of his profession. Unfortunately, the art of condensations is almost unknown among Indian reporters. What represents their product of condensation is more or less of a poor character. Two facts are in their way. Firstly, their training and culture are nowhere; while their limited faculty is unable to winnow the wheat from the chaff. Hence it is that condensed speeches by Indian reporters generally read either nonsense or at the best a most attenuated edition of the original in which it may be difficult to discover the material points of the speaker. Mr. Reed is of opinion that "for a perfect and ideal condensation" a reporter should have perhaps before him a verbatim report of the speaker's words. But this involves a deal of labour which, if possible, should be economised. A reporter, therefore, who can listen to a speech and get down the salient points as they are made one after the other is likely to succeed infinitely better and give a condensed speech full of excellent matter than the one who labours through a mass of verbatim notes and does his best to evolve order out of chaos.

Enough has now been said to acquaint the reader with the many important qualifications needed for a competent reporter. In the following pages he will find ample pabulum scattered to make himself even more closely conversant with the multifarious requirements which the exigencies of a modern newspaper of first-class reputation imperatively demand. All that now remains to be said is this ; that the thoroughly competent "all-round" reporter who is at the same time steady and trustworthy is "a journalistic gem of the first water," according to Mr. Alexander Paterson. His worth to his employers is "far above rubies." This is no hyperbole. Only employers can appraise the value of the gem. Says the same authority, that the journalist who possesses these qualifications takes a pleasure in his work and studies to make the interest of the paper with which he is connected his own. "He begrudges neither time nor labour in order that he may discharge his duties with credit to himself and to the satisfaction of his employers and the public." We only know of one such who nearly answers the description. To Madras belongs the honour of possessing him and his name is Mr. Rajgopal Chariar.

We may now turn our attention to speakers. As there is a variety of mind, there is a variety of speakers, good bad and indifferent. If reporters have a duty to discharge towards speakers, speakers, too, have a responsibility not only towards the public to whom they are supposed to address but towards the reporters themselves. The first and most essential of virtues in a speaker should be distinctness of utterance. No other virtue can compensate for it. It is the cardinal virtue which every person desirous of speaking from a public platform must acquire and cultivate. He may be slow or rapid in his utterances ; he may have all other qualities which make the reputation of a good speaker ; but if he cannot make himself distinct and audible to the reporter, he is likely to be unpopular with that entity in the first instance and, secondly, with his audience. For purposes of efficient and

perfect reporting, it is essential that the reporter should hear him from first to last. If a speaker begins his sentence loudly and becomes inaudible or partially inaudible at its conclusion, it is a trouble to the reporter. Every speaker, again, has his own mannerisms. These, too, are a prolific source of vexation to the stenographer. Hence distinctness of speech and audibility are the first essentials in the speaker. It should be remembered that a loud voice is not the same thing as a distinct one. "The essence of distinctness," says Mr. Reed, "is a clear, crisp articulation." For the reporter he is the best speaker who combines distinctness of articulation with strength of voice. But the combination is rare. Mr. Spurgeon, was known to be a fine example of a clear, musical, ringing voice, he added an almost perfect articulation. Canon Liddon is another instance, says our authority, "his voice, clear and rich, penetrates the most distant aisles" of the great Cathedral of St. Paul. Among Parliamentary speakers Mr. Gladstone was known to be one of the clearest and most distinct. Even at open-air meetings reporters were able to catch every syllable of what he spoke. One of the few speakers on Indian public platform who can most approach Mr. Spurgeon is Mr. Kalicharn Bannerji of Calcutta. Mr. Eardley Norton of Madras is another. Mr. Pherozechah Mehta is another distinct and loud speaker. So, too, Mr. W. C. Bonnerji and Mr. Surendranath Bannerji.

Speed is another important feature in the speaker's delivery. Where reports have to be taken verbatim, it is as good as "an exciting chase" for reporters to follow the speedy speaker. There are speakers who rattle away at a tremendous velocity, say 150 to 200 words per minute, which is their despair. "There is no one who, as far as mere speed is concerned, so tries the mettle of the reporter as your quiet, unimpassioned, easy, flowing speaker, who speaks just loudly enough to make himself distinctly heard, and pursues the even tenor of his way without a pause, without emphasis, without anything that can check the rapidity of his utterance \* \* \* The short-hand reporter would

rather follow Boanergis for half a day than your quiet, glib, conversational speaker for half-an-hour, and the irritating part of the matter is that while the unfortunate reporter is straining every nerve to keep pace with this scourge of his professional life, the work seems so provokingly easy." It will be seen from the above description what a trouble the very rapid speaker is to the reporter. The man who speaks with the rapidity of the railway is his *bete noir*. Unless his fingers are supple and nimble as is the tongue of the speaker, the poor stenographer is nowhere in the race. However he may concentrate his energy on the task, it is of no avail.

Next, much of the reporter's difficulty arises from the structure or style of speeches. Here we shall allow Mr. Reed to speak in his own graphic and effective way. "Some speakers speak with the accuracy of a written composition, and if they are reasonably deliberate they are very popular with the reporting fraternity. The case is far otherwise with speakers whose style is loose, inaccurate and ambiguous. Mere grammatical errors give the reporter very little concern as they can be easily set right, but what does harass and perplex him is an involved, complicated style in which the sentences seem to have no beginning or end, and in which it is almost impossible to say what relation the different clauses have to each other." No doubt such a careless speaker is the despair of the reporter and it is indeed cruel to impose upon him the task of unravelling such a tangled skein of words as those described above. Such a speaker if he is held bad by the reporter may be safely considered bad by the audience also. Says Mr. Reed; "it is not long sentences in themselves, or difficult words, that create embarrassment—it is intricate sentences that defy analysis that are the bane of the reporters' existence and weigh upon him like a night mare." In the case of such speakers it is always well that they should obtain from the reporter a literal transcript of his utterances. It would indeed be a revelation to him, for he will see in the transcript, as in a mirror, what he had actually spoken. In these days of scientific

appliances, the phonograph may even prove more faithful than the transcript. There cannot be a more absolutely faithful recorder of words than that marvellous instrument which, it is said, is already coming into vogue for reporting purposes. The phonograph to such speakers would soon teach a lesson in discipline and exercise which might not only prove useful to himself but a great relief to the reporter. We read the other day that the Municipal Council of Etampes have introduced the phonograph to record the proceedings of its members. A contemporary observes that the general introduction of the phonograph may prove a double-edged instrument. It may be worth quoting his observations "The reporter produces a speech as it should have been delivered but the phonograph will be more faithful and less kind. It will give also all interruptions. We can imagine a phonographic report of a speech being a very undesirable production. Thus:— "Mr. Chairman, *ahem*, ladies and Gentlemen we are met, *ahem*, on this, *ahem*, auspicious occasion (speak up "old your head up) upon this *ahem*, auspicious occasion (out with it or to let ' them 've it go it ole brass lung to er) Really in the face of such interruption I cannot go on go on (do not apologise) on this auspicious occasion." Thus while the phonograph will be an absolutely faithful recorder it will also portray the speaker's utterances as in a mirror for which he should thank the instrument which is certain to teach him to improve himself. But we have not yet made the phonograph the universal instrument of reporting speeches, let alone other matters. It has not yet superseded the reporter whose vocation, therefore, is not yet gone. And while he lasts he can certainly avenge himself sometimes on his persistent tormentor by gibbetting him in the public by way of a literal transcript. We dare say the "orators" of our local civic bodies everywhere would be all the better for such a gibbetting. It may stem the tide of the torrential balderdash which passes for what is by courtesy dignified into a speech.

Sufficient has been already said about the art of intelligent ~~condensation~~. This, however, will not suffice for a good reporter.

He need not slavishly adhere to the speakers' words. There is a difference of opinion among reporters on this subject. The question is whether a reporter is justified in departing from the precise phraseology employed by a speaker. It is held that some speeches may be of such a character as no reporter would dream of reporting literally. There are speakers whose style is incoherent, whose grammar is loose, whose sentences are involved, hence a complete transformation is needed so as to make the speech readable and intelligent to the public. Further, should such a speech happen to deal in statistics, it makes matters worse for the reporter, because the labour involved is great. Mr. Reed has a drastic suggestion for such bad speakers—not to report their speeches at all.

In another way, too, the task of a reporter is made exceedingly difficult. There are speakers who have the vice of uttering involved sentences which are seldom complete. They, too, are a despair of the stenographer. Nothing short of a reconstruction of their speech would serve the purpose of the public. It has to be done and his difficulties may therefore be easily imagined. Here is an excellent specimen of the man of involved speech.

"The Resolution which has been moved by my friend on my right—I wish he was always on my right, for he is a kind of man—you know what I mean—I am always glad, and so is everybody that knows him as well as I do—we went to school together I don't know how many years ago and I don't want to remember—I was about to say that the principles which we are met this evening are principles that no one, not even the lady who has just spoken—and we are delighted to see ladies on the platform; how we should get on without them I am sure—well, I suppose they could not get on without us either, for you know Milton says or if it is not Milton, I am not quite sure, but as we advance in life our memory does not improve; at least that is my experience."

What a confusion of incomplete and parenthetical sentences



indeed ! And how may a reporter report such trash as it was spoken. There is not a single idea conveyed. What about the resolution, what about " the principles which we are met " ? and all the rest of the bathos ?

It is evident that if a speaker is desirous of seeing his speech faithfully recorded he must be precise in his language and deliberate in his utterances. But speakers who speak with precision and deliberation are rare—we mean those whose speeches the reporter could transcribe with care as much as if he were fairly copying out a clean and correct draft. Mr. Reed says the vocation of the skilled reporter would be gone were speakers of the type referred to were numerous. " Difficult speeches, whather in point of speed or verbal construction, demand the services of highly skilled reporters."

A highly finished and trained reporter, it should be remembered, makes a very trenchant critic, and so long as he honestly criticises a speaker, without personal or political bias, his criticism must be held in high estimation. The *Phonetic Journal* asks : " Who are better able to criticise public speakers than reporters upon whom devolves the task of reporting their utterances ? A man's valet knows more of his master's faults than the outside public, and is aware of faults the very existence of which that public does not suspect. And the reporter knows just what are the faults of the speaker better than most others of his hearers. Thus, if the reporter's wit is sharpened as a critic, the orator is improved too by the criticism of the reporter, provided, of course, he cares to improve. For, the orator generally poses as the superior person to the reporter who may sometimes be a match for him in the art of public speaking." But Indian orators of the superior type can hardly profit by the criticism of skilled reporters as the species of the last is non-existent. This is a great drawback. Criticism remains uncultivated and oratory remains unimproved.

It seems that some speakers have an infatuation in the matter of public speaking. In their opinion a speech is not a speech if

it does not contain a large quantity of words. "Words, words, Sahara of words"—that is about their standard of what a speech should be. The longer it is the greater is it to be admired. Mr. Read gives an instance. "Has he finished his speech"? "Nothing like it, he has spoken five columns and there are five more to follow"! This little parley indicates the sort of difficulty reporters have to meet in their ups and downs of reporting. Speeches can never be judged by the number of words they contain. Their value must be assessed by the thoughts and sentiments expressed therein. It has been recorded of Mr. Gladstone that he was a very deliberate speaker and not difficult to follow, rarely speaking more than 130 words a minute.

It may be here remembered that the standard of a good, bad or indifferent speech for the reporter is different from that of the hearer. The last may be fitted to decide as to its merits as a piece of argument or as an accurate and exhaustive statement of the subject with which it deals; but the reporter applies to it tests which concern its qualities as a *public address*. He views it from his own professional point, he asks whether the speaker was perfectly audible; was he grammatical; was he accurate in his facts and quotations? was he confusing or floundering and so on? In the judgment of the reporter, that speaker is the best who fulfils all his requirements in other words who gives him pleasure and not a penance. "The fact is" (says the *Phonetic Journal*) "that the reporter is the most diligent of all listeners; and he has the greatest and most varied experience of public speakers, their faults affect him more seriously than they affect anyone else; and he may therefore reasonably claim to be a trustworthy critic of their performance."

In short, it may be observed that there are speakers and speakers. As no man is a hero to his own valet, so no public speaker is a hero to his reporter. An American reporter, Mr. Whitford, has made a classification of speakers based on his personal experience—he speaks of ten different kinds of speakers.

- (1) The moderately low speaker who is every way a "blessing" to the reporter.
- (2) The exuberant and tempestuous. The verbosity demands infinite trouble of condensation; and the tempests are another source of penance.
- (3) The musical but flowery who has a penchant for quoting unknown poets, and is, besides, indistinct and inaudible.
- (4) The rapid and the spasmodic, who is by no means uncommon, and is besides distinguished for hurling disconnected sentences at the audience which it becomes an effort for the reporter to put into ship-shape.
- (5) The excessively rapid but who calls for no other comment.
- (6) The irrepressible who must make it a point of speaking for speaking's sake and who has nothing particular or new to say which is worth hearing.
- (7) The long winded whom the reporter calls "Mr. Blank."
- (8) The clear, distinct, unassuming who is the delight of the reporter and the audience.
- (9) The "orator" who begins at a deliberate and measured pace and swells to full concert as he progresses with his sonorous and rolling periods.
- (10) The genius who is a *born* speaker not made.

"The study of all these types of speaker is an education in itself." So says our authority, and, who will deny this shrewd observation?

There remains now the review of the actual duties and functions of the reporter. This is a most comprehensive topic to be dwelt upon. The reader will notice from the copious

extracts given in the text what honourable work can be rendered to society at large by reporters of undoubted qualifications and sterling integrity. But as we just stated, if there are speakers and speakers there are reporters and reporters. Be this as it may, the cardinal point to be borne in mind is this, that if speakers have a duty to discharge towards reporters, reporters also have a duty to discharge towards speakers. There should be reciprocity on both sides, sympathy, honesty, and above all candour and freedom from prejudice or partisanship. There are great public organisations like Parliament and Legislative Councils, Municipalities and Courts of law. Parliamentary reporting during a sitting session is, above all, the most arduous work which demands from the short-hand reporter all those high and varied qualifications which distinguish him from the humdrum or mediocre brother of the craft. They draw out all his good intellectual traits, his powers of condensation, and his perfect impartiality. There is no disciplinary training so exacting, and yet so prolific of permanent good as parliamentary reporting. Next only in importance is reporting in courts of justice. Here the reporter has to discharge two separate functions. He has to take down correct evidence of witnesses, and to note the judgment of the judge. Both operations carry with them a serious responsibility—responsibility even graver than that involved in parliamentary reporting. In the Courts of law there are but few really good elocutionists. In the first place according to Mr. Reed, the counsel and the judge at the best have to address an audience which does not exceed twelve men, members of the jury. The pleading barrister has no need to raise his voice beyond making himself audible to the bench and the jury. Hence most counsel are careless in cultivating the art of speaking loud enough to be heard by a multitude. Of course, there is reason on his side. A speaker on a public platform may have to “orate” perhaps occasionally or at the best once of an evening in a week. Not so the practising barrister. Those who have fat practice are busy all day in the law courts. More or less they are on their legs for 4 to 6 hours during which

elaborate arguments have to be urged and long addresses to be made. He is bound to economise his vocal powers and therefore seldom makes an attempt to speak loudly enough to be heard by any save the judge and the jury. Under such a condition of affairs the work of a short-hand reporter in a court of justice is exceedingly arduous. Oftener than not he may not be conveniently seated for purposes of hearing. Says Mr. Reed! "There is hardly a judge on the bench who has a thoroughly good delivery and not a few are sadly deficient in this respect. \* \* Some judges, instead of speaking, absolutely mumble, and to report them is one of the most difficult tasks that fall to the lot of the short-hand reporter." Short-hand notes have often to be called into requisition in law courts. Hence reporters, in important cases, have to take the greatest care how they take down notes of evidence and the judges' judgment or verdict. Almost absolute accuracy is demanded as even the mistake of a single word may cause serious embarrassment. Mr. Reed inquires how is a qualified reporter, desirous of taking short-hand notes fully and accurately, to do when "the occupant of the bench speaks in a low tone of voice and does not clearly articulate his words." This is really a great disability for the short-hand reporter for which he is in no way responsible. Hence the following observations of Mr. Reed will be considered perfectly justifiable by all right minded persons, including the judges themselves. "Judges now and then complain of mistakes in short-hand writers' notes but they little know how much they themselves contribute to the errors by their indistinctness of utterance." Reporters of the older generation who may have had to take down notes in our own local courts of law would remember indifferent and indistinct barristers like Messrs. Pigot, Dunbar, Latham and others; and judges like Sir Richard Couch and Mr. Justice Green. The late Advocate General Mr. White was a loud and distinct speaker; and equally so was the late Mr. Mac Culloch who had in him all the qualifications of a brilliant speaker.

The *Phonetic Journal* remarks that none can say "that short-hand has yet attained its proper recognition of the law court, or that our judicial arrangements with regard to it are entirely satisfactory." This is very true: but the value of a competent legal short-hand reporter is being gradually appreciated. The time is fast approaching when his proper place in judicial administration will be recognised, and when he will become an indispensable adjunct to our courts of justice as much as the superior law officers themselves. In matters of law reform the British are indeed most extraordinarily conservative. The reader will remember the great speech which Lord Brougham made in 1828 before the House of Commons for the law reform urgent in those days. No doubt many a wholesome and humanising reform has since been made and the progress, though slow, is satisfactory. Among other proposals Lord Brougham urged the importance of every law court having a sworn short-hand reporter; anyhow he was most desirous of having such a functionary for every *Nisi Prius* case. He observed; "Those who attend our courts of *Nisi Prius* are aware how sorely the judge is hampered, and his attention diverted from more important considerations, by being obliged to take such full notes of evidence. The practice is necessary, because the only record of the facts of the case is to be found in his notes. Now, the judge is often a slow writer, and, in this respect, men differ so much, that one judge will try three or four causes while another will dispose of only one, and one will impede a cross examination so as to render it quite ineffectual, while another will never interrupt it at all. It happens likewise that a judge may be an incorrect taker of notes, which not infrequently leads him to an incorrect decision, at least to an incorrect report of the case when a new trial is moved for, no judges ever write short-hand, and for no other reason, than their notes may have to be read by another, if the record comes not out of their own court." Though since 1828 there have been many an improvement in the English law courts and though competent short-hand reporters are known to constantly take notes, which in important cases tried, are often

put into evidence, this particular reform advocated by so competent an authority as Lord Brougham, remains unaccomplished to this day. It is scarcely necessary to enumerate the immense advantages which might accrue to the court and the litigants themselves by the employment of such short-hand reporters. How much might public time be saved, thereby curtailing expenditure on counsel's fees and other charges. In Indian law courts, where owing to the necessary evil of interpretation in our High Courts — and Subordinate Civil and Criminal Courts a great deal of time is occupied in hearing a case which might otherwise be avoided. Under such a condition of affairs, it is superfluous to urge the expediency and importance of official short-hand reporters of the necessary qualifications. The saving in ordinary costs will be immense; while the other conveniences and facilities needed by the courts and the litigants alike would be immense.

Meanwhile let us quote what our authority has to say on the competency of those short-hand reporters who take notes of evidence in English courts of law. They are "men who bring a highly trained intelligence to bear upon their work, and possess the capacity to write at a high rate of speed. There is knowledge that can be gained only by a constant attendance in court. The court reporter must not only be able to take down court phraseology but he must understand it, or he will fall into many pitfalls. He must understand the procedure of the courts and know something about the various law reports from which he will hear counsel reading quotations. He must have access to copies of the reports, in order to verify any quotation. \* \* The work is arduous, and its variety, if it lends a certain charm to it, is not without drawbacks. When a man is engaged to take notes in a particular case he never knows what is in store for him. The questions at issue may turn upon the details of some intricate machinery; he may have to take down the evidence of an engineer bristling with all sorts of technicalities. His next case may be one arising in connexion with the silk trade or with color printing or with the disposal of various kinds of

agricultural produce. Each case brings with it its own technicalities; and the short-hand writer must be prepared to deal equally well with all of them. There are other difficulties. The witnesses may be foreigners who speak broken English, or Englishmen with an unfamiliar dialect. Then there are witnesses who will not speak up, judges who mumble, counsel who will talk as if they were holding a private conversation with the judge, and a good many people in court who will talk when they should be silent. And there are uncompleted sentences, slips of the tongue and occasional lapses into obscurity, all requiring intelligent treatment." We have quoted the passage copiously with the view to apprise the reader of the many difficulties the competent short-hand reporter has to contend with in taking reports in a court of law and how arduous and diversified is the work he has to undergo. Unfortunately India does not boast of law reporters of the great qualifications described above. But, as we have more than once observed, Indian short-hand reporting is still in its infancy and the competent reporters, models who will answer the description, are yet to be created. But this very want again demonstrates the facts to which we have previously alluded to, namely, that the field of short-hand reporting in India is still virgin and those who are desirous of working in it have admirable prospects. All that is wanted is full equipment of a high order, in exhaustible perseverance and unabated energy. The more that they begin to take intellectual interest in that work, the greater will be their ultimate gain, while the benefit to the country for the existence of such trained experts cannot be overrated.

It is only a question of time when the law courts of the United Kingdom will employ short-hand reporters. Lord Herschell in an interesting speech made by him at Queens Hall in 1897 observed that he had for twenty years advocated the presence of a short-hand writer in every court of justice. Public opinion has long supported this view. Mr. Justice Barnes simultaneously with the late Lord High Chancellor advocated the reform from



his seat on the Bench. Meanwhile Mr. Justice Kerr, who never cared to take down notes, has succeeded in getting the City Corporation to employ a short-hand reporter and the work in his court seems to go on smoothly. Other courts are said to be watching the experiment with a view to the general introduction of this most useful assistant. Again Vice Chancellor Hall has succeeded in inducing the Commissioners of the Duchy of Lancaster to get a short-hand reporter to take note of all examinations and judgments. The experiment seems to be a success according to the *Manchester Guardian*. Thus the time we repeat, is fast approaching when not only English but Indian law courts will have an official reporter attached to each court of justice. As the *Phonetic Journal* observes (23 July 1898). "In spite of delays that seem almost incredibly protracted; in spite of stolid indifference to obviously useful inventions; in spite of our excessive caution and our instinctive attitude of suspicion towards new things, in spite of it all, we do move, we do make advance. We are a progressive people. The brake that slakens the speed of the wheels is a very powerful one, but the wheels do turn. And while they turn at all, there is hope of ultimate progress." Many indeed are the instances of misreporting in courts of law in India. We give below a couple of such.

The Hon. Mr. Justice B. Tyabji when at the Bar was once engaged to defend a prisoner who was tried at the Criminal Sessions of the High Court, presided over by Mr. Justice Westropp. Mr Budrudin conducted the defence ably, and obtained from the jury a verdict of "not guilty" for his client, who was acquitted. The next morning the *Bombay Gasette* described Mr. Budrudin's speech in defence of the prisoner in somewhat uncomplimentary terms. Mr. Justice Westropp, on taking his seat that day on the Bench, addressed Mr. Budrudin as follows with reference to what the *Bombay Gasette* had said of his speech:—

"Mr. Tyabji; I am glad to see you here, and also the Reporter of the *Bombay Gasette*, as I wish to make some observations upon the report of the case which was concluded yesterday. The

paper represents you to have made a rigmarole and a nonsensical speech in defence of your client. As these remarks are not only unfair, but likely to do harm to a young Barrister, I deem it my duty to observe that, in my opinion, there is not the slightest foundation for those remarks. I consider the case was most ably conducted by you, and that the acquittal of the prisoner was mainly due to the ability and skill with which you addressed the jury."

The following letter over the signature of Messrs. Fletcher and Smith, Solicitors, High Court appears in *Times of India* 5th October 1878 :—

As your report of a matter decided by Mr. Justice Green in the suit of Rahimbhoy Habibhoy *vs.* Munchershaw Bazonjee and Cassumbhoy Dharamsey which appears in your issue of to-day under the heading "Motion to set aside an award," is not quite accurate and might, if left uncontradicted, give rise to disputes hereafter, we beg to state that the order made by Mr. Justice Green was as follows :—The Plaintiff, by his Counsel contending, and the Court being of opinion, that the matters in paras 2, 3, 4, and 5 of Munchershaw Bazonjee's affidavit of 12th September 1878 are not within the scope of the reference, and therefore not covered by the award, and the Plaintiff undertaking not to set up the reference and award as an answer or bar to any attempt by the Defendants to make the Plaintiff liable for any amount in respect of the said matters, let the rule be discharged with costs." The undertaking actually given distinctly shows that the Plaintiff does not admit any liability in respect of the matters referred to, while from your report it would appear that such liability is not disputed by him.

The following appears in the *Times of India* of 24th December 1880 under the heading "An incorrect report."

In the matter of the claims of the executors of Hajee Esmail Hajee Hubib against the New Fleming, the New Alexandria, and the Nurse Mills now in course of liquidation,

Mr. Inverarity, instructed by Messrs. Ardaseer and Hormusjee, on behalf of the official liquidators, appearing before Sir Charles Sargent, said that he wished to bring to the notice of the Court an offensive and pointed paragraph against the liquidators which appeared in the *Bombay Gazette* of Monday last. He read the para which was as follows :—Sir Charles Sargent, in delivering judgment, remarked that the executors of Hajee Esmail Hajee Hubib were perfectly entitled to be paid their costs of proving their claims, which costs were incurred by them by reason of the conduct of the official liquidators ; that the correspondence and the circumstances disclosed to His Lordship nothing but a simple spirit of resistance on the part of the official liquidators for resistance sake only ; and that the companies were unnecessarily saddled with costs by their captious opposition. The learned judge, after making remarks of a similar nature on the liquidators, allowed the claims of the executors of Hajee Esmail Hajee Hubib, with costs, as against the companies, and ordered the liquidators to pay the costs of Counsel engaged on both sides out of their own pocket, to mark His Lordship's sense of disapproval of their costly and litigant policy.

The learned Counsel stated that he was present in Court on Saturday last when the Court made certain orders, and never heard any such expressions from His Lordship.

His Lordship said that what was contained in the paragraph was neither his judgment, his idea, nor the language he used. He never branded the official liquidators as litigants resisting claims for resistance sake. From certain matters brought before him on Saturday, he thought that the liquidators were mistaken, and that they must, therefore, pay the costs for their mistake instead of the company ; that was all. He never meant to throw any reflection upon them or on their legal advisers.

Mr. Inverarity continued by pointing out that the liquidators had investigated between seven to eight thousand claims, and

brought the same before the Court, and their judgments appeared to have been upset only in two or three claims while in all their claims, and in all suits, they had been invariably successful and even got cost from the other side. They appeared to have worked zealously and conscientiously for the interests of the companies, and had, therefore, incurred the ill-will of certain persons. He cited a precedent with reference to the claims of the Bank of Bombay and Kessowjee Naik against the Nursey Mill, which was heard before Mr. Justice Bayley, who ordered costs to be paid by Kessowjee Naik to the Company. This precedent was followed in several other instances, and the official liquidators correctly believed that they were bound to follow the same precedent in the matters which were brought before the Court on Saturday last. This could hardly be said to be even an error of judgment on the part of the official liquidators when they followed precedents before them. They had distinctly stated that they did not object to pay the costs, but they considered a serious reflection would be thrown upon them if the report in the *Bombay Gazette* was correct. The report appeared to have been supplied with unfriendly motives, and the liquidators had come into Court to vindicate their characters.

His Lordship stopped Mr. Inverarity from proceeding further, and said he must reverse the order made on Saturday last as to payment of costs by the official liquidators. The paragraph in the *Bombay Gazette*, remarked His Lordship, was not his judgment, and it appeared to have been a contribution of an unfriendly critic. He never threw, or meant to throw any reflection of censure on the liquidators or their legal advisers. The liquidators seemed to have done a great deal of good for the general body of creditors, and if the facts brought forward that day were brought before His Lordship on Saturday, he would not have made the order. His Lordship therefore reversed the order of Saturday, and directed the costs to come out of the estate.

At the annual distribution of prizes to the successful students of the St. Xavier's High School on 1st December 1898, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Candy observed with reference to shorthand reporting in Law Courts as follows :—He cordially agreed with the remark in the report that “the winged art of phonography is very useful to students in general.” Speaking for his own profession—that of the law—he pointed out how useful it was for a barrister or pleader to be able to make a verbatim report of the hearing of a case in court, including all the arguments and the judgment. At present, the system of law reporting in Bombay was extremely weak. It was confined to a few gentlemen, who were totally unacquainted with the law terms which continually occurred, or with the books which were often quoted. The result was a report which was often inaccurate and sometimes misleading. Some of them might know that the *London Times* employed a staff of barristers who reported the cases heard daily in the principal courts in London, and these reports were so valuable that they were often quoted as if they were authorized reports. One of the best judges that ever sat on the English Bench began his legal career as one of those reporters. He saw before him, in his daily work in court, a row of young native barristers, gentlemen, he had no doubt, with excellent knowledge of the theory and nomenclature of law, and who, while waiting for the briefs, which they hoped would some day be showered upon them, could not be better employed in gaining the experience necessary for actual practice than by taking careful notes of interesting cases, from the opening speech of Counsel down to the delivery of judgment by the Judge. He believed that, if such reports were offered to the editors of the leading newspapers in Bombay, the next step would be the permanent employment of legal gentlemen as reporters, and the public and the profession would alike be benefited.

In the course of the trial of the *Champion* libel case before Mr. Justice B. Tyebji in February and March 1900. His Lordship

took exception to the accuracy of certain of his observations the previous day as reported in the *Times of India*. We give below a verbatim account of what fell from His Lordship and the Counsel for the Plaintiff.

His Lordship :—Before we begin, I should like to say that the *Times of India* has not given an accurate report of what I said about my conversation with the Chief Justice.

Mr. R. Carnac :—I noticed that.

His Lordship :—I am represented as having stated that the Chief Justice told me there was nothing in his notes showing that the *Champion* was in any way referred to in a discreditable manner. I did not say that, nor did the Chief Justice say anything of the kind—what I did say was that the Chief Justice told me that he had no recollection of the *Champion* having been referred to as discreditable paper before the Court. He has no recollection, he has no positive recollection one way or the other. He has no recollection of its having been referred to as a discreditable paper. As to the notes, the Chief Justice has not referred to his notes since the trial and therefore he is not in a position to tell me what occurred. His impression at present is that there is nothing in the notes one way or the other.

Mr. R. Carnac :—It would be corrected by the press. My own recollection is exactly as your Lordship's that the Chief Justice said that, as far as his recollection went, the *Champion* had not been referred to in any way to its discredit. My learned friend said that they had applied for the notes for reference and I think your Lordship said that there was nothing in the notes about it.

His Lordship :—What the Chief Justice said was that there is no impression on his mind that the *Champion* was referred to in any discreditable manner. He has no positive recollection one way or the other.

Mr. R. Carnac :—I may say that we are misrepresented by  
Mr. A. 31 (Laughter.)

His Lordship :—I have not seen the reports of other papers and I do not know what the other reports say.

Mr. R. Carnac :—I have only read the *Times of India*. That is the paper that I take. I noticed that myself when I read it.

His Lordship :—It is not an important matter to outsiders but it is just as well to be accurate when they make me represent the Chief Justice having said the very thing that he did not say.

Mr. R. Carnac :—If your Lordship will also read the report of this case accurately of that gentleman, you will find throughout that the report is full of inaccuracies.

His Lordship :—We are not always correctly reported.

Mr. R. Carnac :—We are accustomed to that. We never take action against that, but we are accustomed to be misrepresented.

His Lordship :—Yes (laughter).

As regards corrupt reporting of proceedings of meetings of Joint Stock Companies, the reader is referred at the end to an article from the *Investor's Review* from the pen of Mr. A. J. Wilson (*vide* appendix A) which completely exposes the *laches of* Company directors, agents of Joint Stock Companies and also of reporters reporting these proceedings.

Whilst on the subject of inaccurate legal reporting, it would not be out of place to quote two instances of inaccurate medical reporting. The following letter over the signature of Dr. W. G. Don M. D., appears in the *British Medical Journal* 10th August 1901 :—

I have noticed in some of the daily papers a somewhat inaccurate report of the proceedings on the reading of Sir William MacCormac's paper on War Surgery, Past and Present, in the

Section over which I presided at Cheltenham. I did not hear Mr. W. Burdett Coutts, M. P. mentioned by name at all during the discussion, and certainly not by Sir William MacCormac who was throughout beside me; although, of course, the individuality of the former gentleman would naturally be inferred by any listener in the discussion of charges brought against the Army Medical Service during the war by "amateur critics." I may further mention that my own remarks, which were mild enough, apparently got mixed with other speakers in the discussion; for, in some reports I am made to give utterance to sentiments and criticisms I never uttered, and indeed, repudiate. In mitigation of such mistakes, however, I can appreciate the difficulties a press reporter must experience in following a discursive technical discussion by many speakers such as that in question.

The *British Medical Journal* thus notices the above incident:—

The inventive reporter has sometimes supplied a prime minister with wit and a Parliamentary orator with wisdom. But his imagination is not always so happily inspired when he puts into the mouths of speakers words which they never uttered. An instance of such misdirected inventiveness has occurred in connection with the annual meeting of British Medical Association held last week at Cheltenham. In the Section of Army, Navy, and Ambulance, Sir William MacCormac read a short paper largely historical on War Surgery Old and Recent which was followed by a brief discussion. Reports of this discussion, all obviously supplied from the same source, found their way into several of the daily papers in which it was stated that Sir William MacCormac made attack on Mr. Burdett Coutts. We are assured by several gentleman including the president of the section, who were present, that Mr. Burdett—Coutt's name was not mentioned either by Sir William MacCormac or by any of the speakers who took part in the discussion.

We may now wind up this part of our subject by giving an anecdote of the extraordinary zeal of an American reporter. The



ethics of his conduct may be questioned, but there cannot be a more courageous and enthusiastic instance of a reporter who loved his profession. Mr. H. Thomson, in his account of the numerous sides of short-hand reporting, relates how a reporter of the *New York World*, Mr. Choate, contrived to conceal himself in the private conference room of the jury in the trial known as the Flack trial, and in that position managed to take surreptitious notes of their deliberations, for which flagrant contempt of Court he was indicted by the grand jury and sentenced to the penitentiary.

Turning now to Parliamentary reporting, it must be observed that volumes might be written on this subject. But it is hopeless in this Introduction to say aught beyond a few important facts which it is worth the while of Indian reporters to bear in mind. Parliamentary reporting is, of course, the most difficult. It does not call for anything extra in the way of short-hand writing. Says the *Phonetic Journal*: "It is true that the speeches of a few leading statesmen have to be produced verbatim, both in the House of Commons and out of it, but the amount of verbatim reporting is very small compared with the amount of condensation, and of severe condensation. The rate of speaking in the House of Commons is about three columns an hour. At that rate, an eight hours sitting would produce twenty-four columns of the *Times*. It seldom produces one half of that. The report averages from a column to a column and a half, an hour. Therefore, the task of the reporters who write even the longest reports is to select and to omit. The faculty most appreciated in the great bulk of the Gallery reporting for the newspapers is that which was so admirably illustrated for about twenty years in the summary of the Commons which comes before the leaders in the *Times*. During the period named, that column was the best column in the *Times*, because it indicated with laconic crispness, the spirit, feeling, motive which ran through the debates, and was a trust worthy guide to those who did not read the full reports." Thus, more than verbatim report, what is wanted

in a Parliamentary reporter is the power of accurate condensation. This qualification, as we have already observed, can only come of solid grounding and wide culture. The reporter whose summary of important proceedings in Parliament is most likely to be appreciated and admired, is he who is able to follow all experts who may happen to speak on their own special subjects. None who has not kept himself completely abreast of the current and absorbing public questions of the day, and who has withal cultivated extensive reading in all its ramifications can ever hope to provide readable condensed reports, it requires a highly cultured trained faculty which only comes by untiring assiduity and long experience. Two names are specially well-known in our own days who were brilliant Parliamentary reporters—Mr. Justin McCarthy and Mr. Cooper. The former discharged his functions as a Parliamentary reporter with great facility before he became editor of the *Morning Star*. The latter is one of the editors of the *Scotsman* but he never entered Parliament as Mr. MacCarthy did. Thus, condensation requires the precise effect of a speech or of a debate or of a witness's evidence ; every point of importance has to be brought out, and given as far as possible in the words of the speaker. "The ability to seize the exact words of every important passage in a speech, conjoined with the intellectual readiness to detect the essential, and present that to his readers, makes an indispensable part of the equipment of the modern reporter." The able condenser does public speakers a great service.

But to proceed, it should be remembered that in modern parliaments and other deliberative assemblies, the bulk of the debates made is under the impulse of extemporisation. But few speakers have the time to prepare the line of argument they desire to use. Very often they have to speak at a moment's notice ; and although they have their general principles to guide them, they nevertheless have not the leisure to think, to ponder in the way they would desire, over what will they say ; hence diffuseness in their utterances.

And yet very limited liberty is allowed to parliamentary reporters as regards the speeches of speakers whose speeches have to be taken down *verbatim* and faithfully. It is in this task that parliamentary reporters often meet with many difficulties. The speeches are full of imperfections. How are they to correct these without spoiling the resemblance on which the speakers are so anxious? Can he exercise the right of correcting them? Can he act arbitrarily? No. Then, how is the shorthand reporter to please? That is the *crux* of the question. Varied indeed are his difficulties, while the road he has to travel from the beginning to the end is most uncertain. We can only give an old instance (See page 101 of this compilation) of a serious dispute between Mr. O'Connell and the Reporters in July 1833.

From 1833 to 1901 is a vast stride. Meanwhile who is not aware of "Hansard"? It may be interesting to note here that Hansard's parliamentary reports are in no way supposed to be officially authorised ones, though it is popularly believed to be the case. Hansard, the original person of enterprise, began taking reports as back as 1801 in his private capacity; but such was his organization and such the accuracy of the parliamentary debates as reported by him that, in course of time, his reports came to be taken as absolutely correct and reliable. It was owing to this fact that many imagined them to be official and published under the authority of Parliament. The real fact was that it became customary with the firm, which carried on the business of the original Hansard in public reporting, to submit every speech made in Parliament to the respective speaker with the view of allowing him the opportunity to correct and revise it. Almost all members considered this a great convenience and felt themselves obliged to the publisher for giving them the necessary opportunity. The revised speech was really the authorised one approved by the speaker. It came to be regarded as free from all mistakes. Thus, Hansard derived the reputation of being an unimpeachable authority. Members who had revised their own speeches could not repudiate them. Accordingly, the hallmark of

absolute accuracy was imparted to the reports, and the reputation so long enjoyed has added to the authority, for be it said to the credit of Hansard, that he has never abused the privilege which members conferred by making him the sole repository of their corrected speeches. He has no official status. The fact was admitted before the Select Committee jointly of the members of the House of Lords and Commons appointed to report on the cost and method of the publication of the debates and proceedings in Parliament. Only Hansard receives a subvention from the Treasury which is supposed to be equivalent to a grant-in-aid which again varies from year to year in proportion to the length of the debates. That Committee had Mr. Thomas Curson Hansard as a witness. The Committee itself was appointed in 1888 and made its report in the following year. Asked with whom the responsibility rested for the reports which are contained in "Hansards Debates," he replied that it rested with him personally, and not on the shorthand writers who were his servants. The practice has been to send slips to members of both Houses of Parliament, giving them an opportunity of modifying them or correcting them in any way that seemed to them fit. Thus Hansard not only edits the reports made by the shorthand reporters but also the corrections made by the members themselves. Further questioned, whether it would be necessary, if there were an official report, that that report should be verbatim, and whether it would cause some difficulty in producing very lengthened reports of debates in Parliament if every word that was uttered in either House were to be officially reported, the reply was given that the verbatim mass "would be so overwhelming that the public in general would get very tired of Parliamentary institutions." Apart from their portentous bulkiness, Mr. Hansard had another ground for observing that official reporting should be avoided. "One principal reason I may state to be that official reports would give rise to such an amount of criticism, charges and recriminations upon individual members and upon ministers that my expectation is that the life of a minister would be almost intolerable." But we need not go

further into the question of official Parliamentary reporting. Neither is it essential for the purposes of this work to acquaint the reader with the entire history of Parliamentary reporting with its many, serious as well as humorous incidents. That history might be best read by those curious in the pages of the evidence of the Select Committee just referred to, and in those of the earlier one appointed in 1878. And for a still more copious account, we may refer him to the back volumes of the *Phonetic Journal* specially, one of 1893 and the paper on "Hansard, Past and Present, in the Volume for 1897 (18th Nov.) by Mr. Walpole.

There is, no doubt, adequate official reporting in most of the legislatures of the world. And it will be asked, why such has not yet been the case in England which is the mother of all Parliaments. The answer is to be found in the fact, says the *Phonetic Journal*, "that the long struggle for liberty to report Parliamentary proceedings in the Press resulted in the publication, up to the present day, of such copious reports in the newspapers, that the demand for an official report has never been very keen. We have now arrived at a period in the history of Parliamentary reporting when it may be hoped that the House will do one of two things—make provision for a verbatim report by its own reporters or have the field entirely free in the future to private enterprise."

Rockwell's "Shorthand Instruction and Practice" gives much information of importance relative to the methods adopted by various foreign legislatures for securing reports of their debates.

As to speeches in the British Parliament at the present moment, it cannot be asserted that their number is on the increase. At the same time, it is the case that there are probably fewer silent members in the House now than was the case in earlier days. There is a general desire for almost every member to speak. Speaking is the rage everywhere. As far as the House of Commons is concerned, long speeches are said to be traditional. Says the *Phonetic Journal*, "the oration

that winds through three columns of the *Times* newspaper, that abounds in caustic criticisms, fine party catch words, and all the historical appeals that please the orators' supporters, and bring no sort of conviction to his opponents, is expected in all full-dress debates when the general policy of the Government is challenged." Sheridan is credited with a five hours' speech on one occasion. Palmerston performed the feat of one of four and a half hours' duration; while Gladstone equalled Palmerston on several occasions, and exceeded it more than once. But all these long speeches shrunk into small proportions before the feat in orating performed by a member of the Austrian Reichsrath. Mr. Herr Lecher performed the prodigious prodigy of addressing that body for full twelve hours with two interim only of five minutes duration each! Opinions, no doubt, differ as to the value of long or short speeches. A long speech may be justified by its weight and importance and the matter it deals with. But generally, it is to be feared, quantitative speeches are held a great bore, if without matter, without eloquence, and without all those other elements which contribute to sustaining the interest of a debate unflagged. After all, the qualitative test is the best, be the speech short or long. There are some who deem it a bore to hear a long speech, however instructive and informing. These would have the short-hand reporter done away with. But it is said that this remedy would prove worse than the disease. "The presence of an audience, the pressure of strong feelings, the desire to persuade others; these furnish sufficient incentive to oratory." Hence so long as oratory is the natural out-come of certain cultured human feelings, it is impossible to shut out speeches and therefore the reporter. The reporter may be a new invention of the electrician of to-morrow. All the same, oratory must flourish as it has from the days of Nestor and Agamemnon.

We need hardly refer to the utility of short-hand notes in the Army, the Navy, the Medical and Ecclesiastical Services, and in commerce. In fact, one cannot say in what department of human

activity may the assistance of the short-hand writer be not put into requisition.

Let us now turn to the third part of this introduction, namely, the virtues and vices of reporters in carrying on their profession. The fundamental axiom for an honourable and faithful reporter, whose duty is to serve the public, is to give an impartial account. He must be careful not to allow his opinion to influence his reports. "In his degree," says Mr. Reed, "he should aspire to something like the impartiality of the judge, who, whilst on the bench, knows nothing of friend or foe, but decides simply upon the merits and altogether apart from personal considerations \* \* In times of political excitement and contest, the caution, prudence and judgment of the reporter are frequently put to the severest tests, and it will be well for him in such times if he bear in mind the old maxim to have long ears and a short tongue." The advice is golden, but as human nature is weak, it is found that there are reporters and reporters. There are those who religiously and scrupulously follow the maxim of stern impartiality ; and there are those who cast it to the winds. The former will report in such a way as to give no false impression of a speech, out of sheer animosity. He will not omit any vital point which may be essential to the apprehension of the rest, neither will he, by some artful gloss, expose the speaker to ridicule or condemnation. However briefly he may be required to report, he should report accurately. Says Mr. Reed ; "It is the interest of a newspaper proprietor to give his readers accurate reports, and he looks to his reporters to supply that commodity \* \* No honourable reporter should allow himself to be the instrument of personal or political animosity. If he has a duty to his employer, he has also, as we shall see, a duty to the speaker, and he has no right to be a party to any thing in the nature of misrepresentation." Unfortunately, there are reporters who do exactly the opposite of what Mr. Reed describes as the function of an "honourable" reporter. Mr. Reed very rightly observes that "the born reporter is no party politician ; and it is to him

a matter of supreme indifference whether he expands his speech to three or four columns or condenses it into as many lines." Again, the honourable reporter is scrupulous enough to reproduce, as far as possible, the words of public men without misrepresentation. It should be borne in mind that the relationship of reporters to speakers is one of a peculiar character. There is a *distinct* obligation on the part of the reporter to act fairly towards the persons whose speeches he reports. Not that he is obliged to report them fully, but that what he does report shall represent, as far as space will permit, the meaning intended to be conveyed. "The speaker has the right to require," says Mr. Reed, "that he shall not be misrepresented and that, at any rate, the general purport of what he says shall be fairly presented to the reader."

Along with the duties and responsibilities just referred to, it is highly essential for the reporter to maintain his dignity and preserve his self-respect. The reporter must neither demean or debase himself nor allow himself to suffer any humiliation. It is regretfully observed by Mr. Stocqueler in his *Memoirs of a Journalist* that "too many of the reporting staff descend to a great deal of the humiliation of the side-table and iced gooseberry as the price of a little flattery or an elaborate notice of some trumpery affair." Every reader of these pages will be able to verify from his own experience all that is said on this subject.

There is another form of bribery which *Cassel's Saturday Journal* has fully exposed—how silence is purchased by gold. There often occur cases in Police Courts which are never reported. "Business men," says this contemporary, "sometimes find themselves locked up for being drunk and have to appear before a magistrate. I have known more than a single occasion—one of those cowardly drunkards throw half a crown upon the reporters' table with the exclamation. "There, you fellow, buy a drink with that and don't mention my case." But here is a striking instance of bribery in secret. "A most serious charge was made against a clergyman. There was but one reporter pre-



sent. The Solicitor saw the journalist and, after some conversation, he asked what he would take to make no reference to the charge. The reporter hesitated, and thinking he had better fly high, said £ 500. He was offered £ 50. Oh no, he would not think of it. Then more and more was offered, but he held out for £ 500. Unless the sum was paid, he said, by four o'clock that afternoon, his report would be sent to all London papers. At last it was agreed the money should be paid. Would he take a cheque? No. Notes? No, he must have gold. And five hundred sovereigns were shortly afterwards counted out to him in an hotel, and his short-hand book was pitched into the fire" Comment on this case is superfluous.

We next come to hush-money which is paid to reporters. It is a very common, though most reprehensible practice, to offer a little "hush money " to them to keep things out of a paper. Here is what Mr. Reed has to say on this subject. "A man appears in a police court, and he is extremely solicitous that his name should not be paraded in the daily broadsheet. A guinea offered to the reporter may secure his object, and if the reporter is not scrupulous, the public hears nothing of the matter . . . Another form of bribery is that of inducing a reporter to aid a business concern, an exhibition, or a movement of any kind, by writing it up." Of course such "puffs" tell their own tale. People are shrewd enough to discount the laudatory paragraphs. In fact they attach no value whatever to effusions of this kind. "But surely," as Mr. Reed rightly observes "that is not consistent with a high sense of honour and responsibility, and if the Press is to maintain a high tone and merit the confidence of the public, its contributors must be above yielding to temptation of this description."

Apart from the vice of misrepresentation and personal animosity, there is another one in which, it is notorious, a class of reporters habitually indulge. As a judge on the English bench has observed, truth in these days is at a great discount. The class of untruthful reporters is not inconsiderable. What has

Mr. John Mackay to say on this subject? He observes that "the reporter must keep himself absolutely free from malice as a judge, otherwise he will subject the proprietors of his paper to costly litigation and bring his own career to an ignominious end. He must seek to master any tendency to exaggeration or depreciation or caricature he may have, and write with the strictest possible loyalty to fact. The worst thing an honourable reporter can do is to introduce an unconscious bias in his report owing to strong feeling of political partisanship. They may be men of strong opinions and good workers, but they prove far from trustworthy reporters of what they see or hear. This little influence of partisanship is seen in many a different way. The law courts fully recognise the influence of bias, and it is reported of Lord Justice Colton, when he announced that the Court of Appeal could not allow the short-hand notes of a clerk to one of the solicitors to an action to be used in court, rested the decision on this very recognition. The judge considered it impossible, on the part of the clerk, to avoid the unconscious bias of a wish that the evidence should turn out in a particular way.

But worse still is the conduct of those reporters who wilfully omit important statements from speeches of public men with a view to bring them into the clutches of the law. The disclosures made by the counsel of Mr. O'Brien in reference to a speech delivered by that member to his constituents in Mitchelstown on 9th August 1887 will be found at pp. 256-257 of the Compilation.

Again, as an instance of wilful mutilation of speeches, we refer the reader to the history of the speeches of Lord Macaulay as mutilated by Vizetelly, at pp. 258 and 259 of this compilation. The reader will be astonished to learn the extent to which the audacious man carried out his misrepresentations at which Macaulay had to inveigh in the severest terms.

Then there are designing reporters who have been known to have reported venomous speeches never made, and supplied them

to congenial papers. During the Chartist agitation of 1839, there were paid spies in the service of the English Government. These attended the meetings of the Chartist Union whose leaders were against physical force and sought the extension of the suffrage by moral means. Afterwards, the spies sent to congenial papers reports of speeches of a most venomous character, purporting to have been made by the Chartist leaders, leading the public to regard them as wild and dangerous insurgents. Mr. Holyoake gives an account of these, pointing out how unfounded these malicious reports were.

Then there are reporters who carry on a most unscrupulous traffic in manufactured newspaper reports; and there is another set who supply one and the same report to other congenial or dependent newspapers and lay public speakers open to derision. It will be thus seen that reporters are of varieties. As there are black sheep in every profession, so there are in this. But after all, the unscrupulous, malicious and misrepresenting or lying reporters are few. They are the exception rather than the rule, and it is not needful to dwell any longer on this class of journalists. Let us also take the bright side of this profession which is as honourable as law or medicine, and in which many a man, distinguished later on in life, had made a start.

It should be remembered that some of the best literary men, who have left a world-wide reputation, first began their career as reporters. Of reporters in our own days, who have afterwards filled the chair of editors of provincial and metropolitan papers, the number is legion and it is superfluous refer to them. But let us go back a century and more when the Phonetic system of reporting was unknown, while the ordinary method even was not much in vogue, because in its infancy. Dr. Samuel Johnson may be said to be one of the earliest. According to his own statement, that towering personality of the Augustan age of England, never attended the gallery of the House of Commons as a reporter save once. But still he is acknowledged to have written the reports of Parliamentary

proceedings for nearly three years in *The Gentleman's Magazine* from verbal accounts of speeches delivered and communicated to him by members themselves or by those who had heard the latter. When Johnson gave up this kind of work, he was succeeded by Dr. Hawkesworth, author of "The Adventurer." Later on we read the name of Mr. William Radcliffe, husband of the popular novelist of the day. He, too, was for some time engaged in Parliamentary reporting for one of the contemporary journals. This gentleman has been credited with the possession of a prodigious memory. He could achieve many things in his capacity as a reporter which not even "Memory Woodfall" could do. It is said he was in the habit of proceeding direct from the House of Commons to the composing room of the paper with which he was connected, and there dictating at once to compositors two distinct reports. With him, reporting was a passion. He sacrificed brilliant prospects at the bar and even gave up for that passion an important diplomatic post with very bright prospects. Coming to later times we hear of Mr. Perry as Parliamentary reporter. He rose afterwards to become the editor and proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle*. Then there is the distinguished Sir James Mackintosh and Sergeant Spankie. There was Mr. Thomas Barnes who was for many years editor of the *Times*. The other names are Mr. Black, Editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, Mr. Allan Cunningham, Mr. Justice Talford, Mr. Horace Twiss, author of the life of Lord Eldon, Mr. Hall, editor of the *Art Union*, Mr. William Jerdon, for many years principal proprietor and editor of the *Literary Gazette*; Mr. J. Paine Collier, the annotator of Shakespeare, Mr. Sydney Taylor, an eminent counsel and for many years editor of the *Morning Herald* in its halcyon days, Dr. Fuller Winslow, Charles Dickens, the world renowned novelist, Dr. William Russel of Crimean and South African fame, Mr. Roche of the Bankruptcy Court and Mr. Hazlett of the same tribunal. Almost all these commenced their public career as Parliamentary reporters. We could indefinitely enlarge the list but it is

superfluous to do so. None of these ever blushed, in after life, however high they may have risen in social or political position. All were proud of their beginnings as reporters either for the Press or for the House of Commons.

In our opinion, the more in these days of high pressure, which demands great culture, reporters show their individuality, the more they are appreciated and sought after. Very few are aware of the real nature of report working by best men. A good reporter's work bears on the face of it the impress of his individuality. What Professor Owen once said of the original artist or portrait painter may be affirmed of the model reporter. Reports from such, says Mr. Reed, "are pictures painted with words instead of pigments" \* \* Probably no report, whether of an event or speech has ever been written that was not marked by peculiarities attributable to the tastes, habits, and sympathies of the individual reporter." In India we are almost innocent of this individuality.

But if reporters have their individualities, we must not forget that they are human and indulge in their own proclivities. This is to be discovered abundantly in reports of political speeches. Says Mr. Reed, "The reporter is expected to see everything and to relate with the utmost impartiality all that he has seen. But like other mortals, he has proclivities of his own which unconsciously bias his mind and his pen, and give to his narratives a tinge of personality probably unsuspected by himself. Thus it is that if two independent accounts of any one occurrence be compared, they will be found to differ in more than one respect, sometimes in many respects. One reporter will give great prominence to some feature of the occurrence which his rival will treat as of minor importance; or he will omit something which the other is particularly careful to insert. How easy it is for political partisanship to effect the nature of a report! A Tory reporter reporting for a Tory paper a speech delivered by a Tory orator will probably regard as a disgraceful interruption what a Liberal reporter, reporting the same speech for a

Liberal paper, will describe as an attempt to move an amendment. A person referred to in one report as rough, hired by the Radicals, will figure in a rival account as an energetic Liberal elector. One reporter will record every single clapping of hands as "loud cheer;" another will minimise the cheers and draw particular attention to every trifling expression of dissent." This extract is enough, and the reader may add his own personal experience of reports as now and again published of local meetings held on political matters in various parts of this country.

In reality, a reporter should be the representative of the people, and faithfully and impartially report public proceedings. In England they strongly resent the exclusion of reporters from any function, public or semi-public. "The public want to know what the public bodies are doing," says the *Phonetic Journal*, "and they expect that the newspapers shall be allowed to inform them." Readers in Bombay are not unaware of the exclusion of the representatives of the press at the outset from the meetings of the City Improvement Trust, and how the stress of public opinion, eventually led to their admission, with what results is well known.

As representatives of the people, however, reporters have an honourable duty to discharge, namely correct reporting. But with the reporter entertaining a high ideal of his profession, it is not infrequently a difficulty, where the speaker, whose speech he takes down, is faulty in some respect or another. As we have already pointed out, there are speakers and speakers with their respective mannerisms and defects. The class of perfect speakers, who are the delight of reporters, is rare. It was once suggested to Mr. Picton, a member of Parliament whose utterances were generally free from those defects which mark those of the generality of speakers, that he should button hole his fellow members in the House of Commons and impress upon them the importance of consulting reporters as to how they should

speak. The suggestion was a good one and Mr. Reed, in one of his public lectures, observed in reference to it as follows :—" Who is better able to judge of the effectiveness of a speech, *as a speech*, than the reporter who has to take it down ? Others may, perhaps, be more fit to decide as to its merits as a piece of argument or as an accurate and exhaustive statement of the subject with which it deals ; but the reporter applies to it tests which concern its qualities as a public address. Was it clearly spoken so that every word could be heard ? Were the sentences constructed grammatically, and completed, or did they run one into the other in a hopelessly bewildering manner ? Did the speaker make it quite clear when he was quoting, what he was quoting from, and where the quotation began and ended ? Did he quote correctly ? \* \* The public speaker, who will consult the experienced short-hand scribe, whose duty it is to take down his observations on the affairs of the nation or on matters of smaller moment, will almost certainly receive hints of great value ?" This is true enough. But how much do we wish we had in this country reporters of the qualification described by Mr. Reed from whom speakers might derive valuable hints to improve their public utterances. Generally, it is the case here of the blind leading the blind. Mr. Reed's remarks on pure elocutionists may just as well be quoted here. "Elocution is a good thing in itself ; but it is only one of the requisites of effective oratory. When undue attention is given to it, it is prone to degenerate into affectation. The man who is an elocutionist and nothing more is an intolerable bore as a speaker. Let the would-be orator consult the reporters, and he will, at all events, learn what to avoid. The reporter, as the representative hearer—the typical hearer—is entitled to great consideration in this matter."

From orators or elocutionists, we may, for the nonce, turn our attention to fast speakers. It is said that Mr. Herr Richert spoke in the German Reichstag at the rate of 153 words per minute. Count Bismarck, the son of Prince Bismarck, could speak 144 ; and two other good speakers about 120 each. It is

observed by a competent French pressman Mon. J. Depion, that as the French language is more susceptible than the German, of rapid enunciation, the ordinary rate of speech of French statesmen, men like Mr. Leon Say M. Ribot, M. Fallieres, M. Jules Roche and others, is 160 words per minute. M. Rouvier once Finace Minister could speak 200 words. And it is said that in some cases, he has sustained a speech at the rate of 240 words for at least 8 minutes together. Mon. Depoin is of opinion that rapidity of utterance depends not alone on the promptness of ideas or the unfaltering memory of the speakers, but also upon their comparative frequency and practice in Parliamentary elocution. He also affirms that nations long accustomed to Parliamentary institutions are, so far as their facility and quickness of utterance are concerned, in advance of the peoples who have comparatively lately attained to the full assertion of constitutional freedom. In America the rapidity of speakers in the Congress is something prodigious. The late Lord Sherbrooke, more generally known as Mr. Robert Lowe, was considered the fastest speaker in his time in Parliament. Sir Charles Dilke enjoys the reputation at present as being a very rapid speaker. The stenographer, who can keep pace with him, may consider himself fortunate. Mr. Bradlaugh had the reputation of being an uneven speaker. He was deliberate for a time, and then would suddenly put on a tremendous spurt which was the despair of reporters. On the other hand, Mr. Gladstone was the delight of reporters. His oratory was clear, majestic flow. But his rate of speech in public did not exceed the average of 110 or 120 words.

Where speakers are clear and distinct, and where there are none of those obscurities, lapses and other defects so generally common, your first-class reporters render eminent service to them. It is a question what would happen if *verbatim* reports were the rule in newspapers. The result in many cases would be ridiculous. The *Phonetic Journal* observes; "whether reporters improve speeches or not, it is abundantly evident that their labours in the direction of condensation are considerable. Under



their manipulation, the mighty baloon of oratorical gas is reduced to a shape no bigger than one's hand. But in dealing with public speakers, who have no pretensions to rank with our brilliant and polished orators, other arts, besides that of condensation, are exercised by the reporter. Even the fragments of the speeches which are selected for reproduction, call for the exercise of the reporter's powers of composition in converting them into a connected whole ; errors in grammar need to be rectified ; and the speaker's remarks require to be made generally intelligible." Oftener than not, the reporter finds himself, while transcribing his report, face to face with incoherent sentences which, if produced as uttered, might give rise to grave doubts as to the capability of the reporter." Hence, says the *Phonetic Journal*, "these facts indicate with sufficient plainness that the average oratory bears about the same relation to the published report which undressed wool does to ordinary broad cloth."

Cognate to this subject, a reference may be made to the legal controversy which arose in 1899 on the subject of Lord Rosebery's speeches and the copyright thereunto. Leaving other points aside, let us ask whether the reporter is an author? The Master of the Rolls made a proper distinction. A reporter who takes down a speech and transcribes it verbatim is *not* an author. Obviously, there is nothing in the nature of "composition" in the process of transcription by a reporter. He simply arranges the sentences, punctuates, supplies capital letters, and possibly divides the matter into paragraphs. In a verbatim report, the reporter does not furnish either the ideas or the language. But the Master of the Rolls carefully pointed out where reporters fulfil the conditions of authorship. "If the reporter of a speech gives the substance of it in his own language, if although the ideas are not his, the expression of them is his own, and not the speaker's, the reported speech would be an original composition of which the reporter would be the author, and he would be entitled to copyright in his own production."

Another point, in reference to the relation of the reporter to the speaker, might be touched upon here. It should be observed that the relationship is not of employer and employed ; and yet, according to Mr. Reed, there is a distinct obligation on the part of the reporter, to act fairly towards the persons whose speeches he reports. Not that he is bound to report them fully, but that what he does report shall represent, as far as space will permit, the meaning intended to be conveyed. Mr. Reed observes "that no speaker has a right to complain that he is briefly reported. He has no claim to the space allotted to him in the newspaper \* \* He has, however, the right to require that he shall not be misrepresented, and that, at any rate, the general purport of what he says shall be fairly presented to the reader."

This brings us to another point, namely, that no reporter should make himself the instrument of personal animosity. Mr. Reed has some excellent observations to make on this point. "If a reporter is expected to report in such a way as to give a false impression of a speech, to omit some vital point which is essential to the apprehension of the rest, or by some artful gloss to expose the speaker to ridicule or condemnation, no shelter or plea should avail him. However briefly he may be required to report, he should insist upon reporting accurately \* \* No honourable reporter, however, should allow himself to be the instrument of personal or political animosity. If he has a duty to his employer, he has also a duty to the speaker, and he has no right to be a party to anything in the nature of misrepresentation."

It would be needlessly prolonging this Introduction to refer to a score of other points in connexion with short-hand reporting and reporters. The text of the compilation gives ample pabulum for those interested in the matter. And we purposely omit from this Introduction the variety of reporting which the exigencies of the modern daily newspaper imperatively demand. There are varieties of interest in the busy life of a great city—

political, literary, professional, scientific, dramatic, sporting, and so on. It becomes, therefore, a formidable task for an all-round first-class reporter to cope with the speeches he has to report from day to day and hour to hour. Parliamentary reporting is one thing and post-prandial another. Between the two, you can fill in any other kind of reporting. There is the reporting at the Law Courts, a most difficult and responsible job, specially when some celebrated prosecution or suit is being heard, and where the cultured and well-informed reporter has to guard himself against inaccuracies. When we bear in mind the number of judges and counsel who simply mumble and who are as indistinct as they possibly can be, the reader may well imagine the accurate work of the honest reporter. His notes must be specially accurate lest some dispute should arise leading to the examination of the reporter himself in the witness box, and an inspection of his notes as transcribed. He must possess sufficient technical knowledge ; otherwise he is sure to flounder. Speaking from his own experience, Mr. Reed observes : " In the courts of law there are but few really good elocutionists \* \* This often makes it a difficult task for the short-hand writer to report his words if, as sometime happens, he is not very conveniently placed for catching them. There is hardly a judge on the bench who has a thoroughly good delivery, and not a few are sadly deficient in this respect. \* \* Some judges, instead of speaking clearly, absolutely mumble, and to report them is one of the most difficult tasks that fall to the lot of the short-hand reporter. A judge's summing-up or judgment, even his *obiter dicta*, must be taken down with the greatest accuracy. The short-hand notes are often cited in subsequent proceedings and the mistake of a single word may cause serious embarrassment." As in reporting matters going in law courts, so in professional and technical lectures. The reporter must be clever enough to follow the general trend, the scientific reasoning and the technicology which may be introduced therein.

Then the accurate reporter has to take the greatest care of his phonographic characters, the slightest slovenliness in which

leads to ridiculous, aye, even serious mistakes. The misplacement of a dot, a wrong inclination of a stroke or a curve, may make read things topsyturvy. As Mr. Reed observes, "a hook turned the wrong side or a circle elongated into an oval may spoil the finest peroration ever pronounced; that the mere thickening of a stroke that should be light, might so far affect the style of the composition as literally to change *pathos* into *bathos*!" But all these points show how careful should a short-hand reporter be, and what must be his qualifications if he is to be an honest and accurate reporter. Hence it is greatly essential to distinguish between a reporter who is genuine and one who is counterfeit. "There are," says Mr. Alexander Paterson, "the hangers-on of the press who constitute a vast and most heterogeneous mixed multitude. They are to be met with in every town and district, and though they call themselves 'reporters' they have no right to such designation. Not a few of them earn a precarious livelihood as liners, and others in less reputable ways, and it is men of this kind who bring discredit upon the profession, the general public not always taking the trouble to discriminate between the genuine and the counterfeit."

The latest development in the art of reporting is what is known as interviewing. The credit of this art is attributed to Mr. J. B. McCullagh, editor of the *St. Louis Globe Democrat*. He may not be *the* originator of it, but all press authorities are agreed in saying that he was the very first of Western newspaper men to develop it and demonstrate the every-day utility of the interviewer. Of course, interviewing is now acclimatised, so to say, all over the world wherever there is sufficiently intelligent public opinion and an enlightened press. Though it may be unhesitatingly remarked that, nowhere does the art flourish so well as in America, its native home. New York and San Francisco, again, carry the palm. It may well be asked "what is interviewing?" We will answer it in the words of Mr. Burr "The art of interviewing consists in taking a mental photograph of the words of another and of developing into a complete story

or word picture. Perhaps, it would be fair to call the one who follows this profession a literary sponge taking in and giving out the views of others." It may be now readily admitted that interviewing, specially political, diplomatic and scientific personages of renown and distinction, is indeed a valuable acquisition to our knowledge which but for it might have been nowhere or buried in the secret recess of the interviewed themselves, unless they chose to give it out in some other direct or indirect way. The interviewer, again, must, like the poet, be born. It is not that every person trained in editorial work is a qualified interviewer. Says Mr. Burr: "A man to be a successful interviewer must have a thorough knowledge of the world, touch elbows with every class of society, be a careful student of human nature, have a quick and reliable memory, good judgment, good faith, and an intelligence broad enough to thoroughly grasp any subject he is discussing with his victim." This is the ideal interviewer. The species, however, is entirely unknown to India. We have here mere apologists whom, by courtesy, we call interviewers. It is said of Mr. Jefferson Davis that he was a most difficult man to be led into an interview. When once approached by one of the tribes, he emphatically delivered himself in the following strain: "Sir, I have never permitted myself to be catechised upon any of my public acts or upon any matters upon which I have acted or chosen to speak of." On the other hand, General Ulysses Grant was a very pleasant subject of vivisection by the interviewer. Longfellow has been highly spoken of in this respect. Indeed, he valued reporting so much that he is said to have observed a year before his death that the newspapers were now the masters of communication with the people, and that the conversational way of writing for them was most readable. One of the most important things for success in obtaining an interview from almost anyone, says Mr. Burr, is to get the person addressed thoroughly at ease before turning the conversation upon the subject to be discussed. One has to study the mood of the person before him, watch the action of the eyes, and the countenance intently. In America, some public men

have solved the inconvenience of interviewing in a unique way. They write themselves the "interview," while the interviewing reporter waits for the copy! However, the art of interviewing is progressing. How long it will last cannot be predicted. Perhaps when the American pressman has invented something more original to supersede it.

Lastly, we may say a few words on the value of publicity by means of reporters. Of late, there has been a great deal of discussion at some of the meetings of Municipal Councils in England as to the admission of reporters. In many places, their presence at committee meetings is proscribed. This has raised the broader question of the value of publicity. It has been urged that the exclusion of pressmen at such meetings is justifiable under certain circumstances. For instance, it would be extremely unwise to have their presence while a Board is considering contracts and their terms, prices of lands and buildings to be acquired for public purposes, negotiations of an important character, correspondence touching serious litigation and so forth. To admit reporters, under such circumstances, would be exceedingly mischievous. Everybody concedes that the House of Commons could not effectively negotiate a treaty with a foreign Power by open discussion in the presence of reporters. The American Senate when it goes into what is called "executive session" rigorously excludes reporters. Prof. Bryce says that in America there is a growing feeling to invite publicity in such matters as it is likely to lead to purity. But it may be laid down as a broad and wholesome proposition that, while there are subjects which cannot be discussed in Committee Meetings in the presence of reporters, without prejudicing public interests, there are many questions with which it is eminently desirable the public should be fairly acquainted. On the whole, we agree with those who say that the freedom of the Press is "the ozone of public life" and purifier of the blood of public bodies in general.

We think we have now well-nigh exhausted all that could be said on the salient features of reporting and reporters. But this

Introduction will be incomplete, if we refrained from throwing out a few practical hints and suggestions with a view to seeing, by and bye in this country, a really able and thoroughly upright class of reporters who could take a pride in their noble profession and strive indirectly to promote the literary activity among our countrymen and stimulate a higher order of public speaking. We have heard over and over again from a variety of gentlemen, whose opinions are entitled to respect, that in India we have yet to establish a class of professional reporters in the sense that the class is established in England and America. But both countries are so immeasurably in advance of all matters, moral and material, that it is not possible even to get that class during the next half century unless meanwhile the social, literary, political and economic progress is striking and phenomenal. The foundation, however, can be laid, and there is ample material in the alumni of our Universities from which to institute a class of short-hand reporters of the requisite ability and qualifications. What is wanted is a united effort in each Province to make an excellent beginning. Of course, the scope at first will be small, but as each department of the State fully appreciates the immense value of short-hand writing and short-hand reporting, the demand for young men trained in the art will be greater. Already the merchant class has begun to employ short-hand writer, and the chance is that the employment will be extensive as time advances. So every court of law, every Secretariat, in every branch of it, every literary institution, from the University downward, every liberal and mercantile profession must perforce engage men well versed in short-hand writing. And the same class of men, with their greater proficiency, and "all-round" knowledge would furnish the needed class of qualified reporters for the press.

We, however, cannot but express our great scepticism as to the rise and growth of really trained and capable reporters in India unless there is scope for them, and unless they are enabled to earn an honest living. It is said that if our High Courts employ short-hand reporters, who would greatly obviate the

present laborious work the judges have to undergo in the clerical work of taking down notes of evidence, counsel's argument, and writing out judgment, it would be no mean an opening. There are, again, other departments subordinate to our judicial administration where suitable employment might be found. In the long run, there may be both economy of time and greater efficiency by the adoption of the course suggested. Then again it is said, that, with a view to stimulating the art of short-hand writing and reporting, the University might be moved to prescribe, both in the Matriculation and School Final examinations, a course of studies. Certificates in this special branch may be issued. In this way, a beginning would be made to raise a class of professional reporters. There is, no doubt, sense in the suggestion; but after all, we repeat, the utility of the course will only be justified by the support which the young certified persons may receive from the press and public bodies in the country. Where are the reasonable chances of such support? In England, it is true that the School Boards have prescribed a special course for short-hand. But then India is not England. When the literary condition of India is equal to that of England, we may hope to follow the excellent example of the London School Board. We have tried to consider this question from an impartial stand point. We shall all be glad to see such a desirable class of professional reporters as have been advocated in our midst. But let the practical be considered by the light of the reasons herein urged. No doubt Mr. Reed was right when, in the paper he read as back as 1894 before the Institute of Journalists at Norwich, he observed that "there is a wide field for short-hand quite outside the walks of journalism." But unless that sort of wide field is open to Indian youths, it is to be feared there cannot be many who will specially take to this line. It is no doubt a most honourable profession; but it must be well supported, and if the publication of this valuable compilation admirably prepared by the gentleman who is content to remain anonymous contributes in any way, however small, to the realisation of the object



many have in view, the compiler will not have laboured in vain. To him it will be his sweetest reward that he was instrumental in firing the spirit of many a rising youth among us to take to this honorable profession in whose ranks may be counted statesmen and philosophers, chancellors and judges, celebrated novelists and other men of great literary fame. Let me hope that his object may be fully realised in the course of time.

D. E. WACHA.

*15th June 1902.*

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*If all the feelings of a patriot glow in our bosoms on a perusal of those eloquent speeches which are delivered in the Senate, or in those public assemblies where the people are frequently convened to exercise the brightness of Britons—we owe it to shorthand. If new fervor be added to our devotion, and an additional stimulus be imparted to our exertions as Christians, by the eloquent appeals and encouraging statements made at the anniversaries of our various religious societies—we owe it to shorthand. If we have an opportunity, in interesting judicial cases, of examining the evidence, and learning the proceedings with as much certainty, and nearly as much minuteness, as if we had been present on the occasion—we owe it to shorthand. In short, all those brilliant and spirit-stirring effusions which the circumstances of the present time combine to draw forth, and which the press transmits to us with such astonishing celerity, warm from the lips and instinct with the soul of the speaker, would have been entirely lost to posterity, and comparatively little known to ourselves, had it not been for the facilities afforded to their preservation by shorthand. Were the operations of those who are professionally engaged in exercising this art, to be suspended but for a single week, a blank would be left in the political and judicial history of our country; an impulse would be wanting to the public mind, and the nation would be taught to feel and acknowledge the important purposes it answers in the great business of life.—(MR. GAWTHRA.)*

## **Shorthand Writers and Reporters Differentiated.**

By many persons shorthand writers and reporters are presumed to be one and the same. *De jure* they are, as they both write shorthand; but *de facto* they are not: the one is merely a word-taker; while the other, if he understands his business properly, is not only an efficient shorthand writer, and, consequently, able to take down the words of a speaker when his importance renders it necessary;—but whether reporting every word, or simply preparing condensed.

reports of long wordy harangues containing but few principles, he is invariably called upon to exert his mental powers to a far greater extent than the other. For instance, a man may make an indifferent speech so far as language is concerned, (and that is a most important element,) but replete with excellent matter, which it is the province of the reporter to judiciously condense, to improve, and, in fact, to render intelligible. In short, it is the province of the reporter to make good speeches for bad speakers.

An amusing instance of the inability of shorthand writers to grasp the essence of a body of shorthand notes—to condense them without destroying the meaning of the speaker, and without omitting a single point, may be here mentioned. Many years ago, when the late Mr. Barnes was the editor of the *Times*, a gentleman, who considered that to accomplish the task of taking every word was to obtain the very acme of perfection as a reporter, was engaged to take a trial turn in Parliament for that influential Journal. He did so, he strained his every nerve; and although the speaker was an unimportant one, every syllable of his address was recorded in his note-book; and, feeling satisfied that he had accomplished his task in a satisfactory manner, he lost no time, as may be imagined, in finding his way to the reporters' room of the *Times* office. Some important foreign intelligence had just arrived, and in order to make room for it, Mr. Barnes hurried into the room, and desired the reporters to condense the parliamentary intelligence. Of course, they felt no disposition to quarrel with the instructions they had received. Turning to Mr.—, Mr. Barnes inquired the nature of his "turn," and the length to which his notes would extend. "Three columns at the least," replied the shorthand writer. "Good heavens! that will never do. You must not go beyond a column or a column and a quarter. You must certainly not write more than one-half of that." The gentleman looked up at the face of the able editor of the most powerful journal in the world, to assure himself that he was really to destroy one-half of his turn. He could not understand it. Surely the editor had gone mad, or become wholly insensible of the value of the great machine placed

under his control. The thing was impossible without completely destroying the task, in the unabridged condition of which he took so much pride. "Cut it down to one-half," retorted the editor rather testily. The shorthand writer counted the leaves of his book, over which his turn extended ; he then divided them, and, looking again into the face of Mr. Barnes, inquired with the utmost simplicity, "which half he should write." We heard that the turn was his first and last. So much simplicity would not do on the *Times*.

A reporter from the north, not many years ago, was engaged by the managing reporter of the *Times*, Mr. Neilson, to take a trial turn. He did so ; and went off to the *Times* office to write it out. His courage however failed him at the sight of the establishment. He became excessively terrified ; but his terror increased ten-fold as he neared the reporters' room. He stood at the door for a few moments, as if the well-known line, "All hope abandon ye who enter here," was emblazoned on the portal. He however ventured to look in. The sight of the reporters, whose fingers were flying across the paper like an express train down an incline, pinned him to the threshold. He simply articulated, "What awful work this reporting is !" and vanished. He was never seen again, and it is to be hoped that he lost no time in retracing his steps to his native hills.—*J. I. Scott*.

## Reporting is a work of Mental Exercise.

If we trace the operations of the mind which are carried on during the act of taking down the words of a speaker as they are uttered by him, we shall not be surprised that a considerable amount of practice is needed before the art of verbatim reporting can be acquired ; the cause of our astonishment will rather be that still greater labor and skill are not necessary to the carrying on of a process so rapid and yet so complicated.

Let us suppose a speaker commencing his address. He utters two or three words, perhaps, in a deliberate manner ; they fall on the reporter's ear, and are thence communicated to the brain as the organ

of the mind ; the writer must then recall to his memory the sign for each word he has heard ; the proper sign having suggested itself to his mind, a communication is made from the brain to the fingers, which, obedient to the will, and trained perhaps to the nicest accuracy of form, rapidly trace the mystic lines on the paper. Some portion of time is of course required for each of these operations to be performed after the words have been spoken ; yet see ! the writer appears to stop precisely at the same time with the speaker ! The orator still continues in his deliberate style, and the reporter is able to write each word he hears before the next is uttered. Now, however, the speaker warms with his subject, and changes his measured pace to one more rapid ; the writer increases his speed accordingly, and notwithstanding the many operations at work in his mind, scarcely is the last word of a sentence uttered before he lifts his pen from the paper, as if for an instant's pause, not a syllable having escaped his ear or pen. This surely is a laborious task ; much more so that which follows. The speaker has finished his exordium, is in the midst of his topics of discourse, and has begun his flights of oratory. Listen to his next sentence. He begins in a low, measured tone ; after a few words makes a sudden pause ; then, as if startled with the brilliancy of his ideas, and fearful lest they should escape before he can give them utterance, he dashes along at an impetuous rate which he never slackens till he is out of breath with exertion. In this rapid delivery he has gained ground to the extent of five or six or more words on the writer, whom probably he has taken by surprise. The latter, nevertheless, has had to listen to the words which were, so to speak, in advance of him, recall the proper sign for each, send it from the brain to the fingers, and trace it on his note-book ; while *at the same time*, he has had to attend to the words which follow, so as to be able to dispose of them in the same way when their turn arrives ; and in this manner are his mental and bodily powers occupied for an hour, or, it may be, several hours together.

It would naturally be supposed that, with all this to attend to, it would be impossible for the writer to think at all of the sense

conveyed by the words which he is at such pains to record ; but, to perform his work efficiently, he must bring his mind to bear on this also, and not only endeavour to understand the general drift of what he is reporting, but to catch the meaning of every expression ; for where this is neglected literal accuracy cannot be attained. The probability is that we do not distinctly hear—hear, that is, so as to be able separately to identify them—half the sounds that compose the words to which we listen ; and it is only, therefore, by our close attention to the context that we are enabled to supply imperceptibly—for few people are conscious of this mental act—the sounds that the ear has failed to convey definitely to us. Hence the necessity for listening to the sense, as well as to the sounds of words, as they flow from a speaker's lips. A minister once told us that in a report of a sermon delivered by him the phrase “the siege of Abimelech” was written and actually printed “the siege of Limerick !” This could not have arisen from a mistake in the written characters, for the forms of Abimelech and Limerick would, in any system of shorthand, be palpably distinct : the ear must, in such case, have been in error, and the sense should have been sufficient to correct it. Every experienced reporter must occasionally have discovered error of this description while transcribing his notes ; his inattention to the sense, while following the speaker, not having led him to correct the false impression which has been made on the ear.

As a mental exercise, then, reporting may be regarded as of the greatest utility. It is true that after a long course of practice the art becomes *apparently* a mechanical one, as far as the taking down is concerned : yet at first all the powers of the mind must be brought to bear on its attainment, and they can hardly fail to be materially strengthened by the training they must undergo. A word, however, as to reporting being a mechanical operation, as some have termed it. No effort put forth by us can be purely mechanical, since the mind is necessary to it. Walking and reading (reading aloud without attending to the sense) seem mechanical acts, but the mind is indispensable to them. After long practice indeed, a comparatively ex-

ternal region of the mind is concerned in them, for we are enabled to think and plan,—operations of more interior faculties—while these outward acts are being attended to ; but at first both walking and reading require, in order to their attainment, a strong exercise, in one case, of all the powers of the body, and, in the other, of all the powers of the mind ; both having been, of necessity, improved and strengthened by the training. It is the same with reporting, but in this case the exercise is more severe ; and if even the act of writing should, by practice, become little more than a mechanical performance, the constant employment of the mind in catching the meaning of different speakers, and the bringing before the writer all the varied styles of diction in use among them, together with the exercise in composition afforded by the transcribing of what has been written, cannot fail to commend the art to all who are interested in education, and in the development of the powers of the human mind. Even where the student of shorthand has been unable to acquire sufficient manual dexterity to follow a speaker verbatim, the practice of reporting will still be beneficial ; since increased attention to the sense will be required, in order that, when abridging a report, nothing material may be omitted. A habit is thus cultivated of separating mere verbiage from the solid material, winnowing the chaff from the wheat ; and though this is not the particular benefit on account of which the cultivation of shorthand is recommended in this article, it is one whose importance ought not to be overlooked in regarding reporting as a mental exercise.—*Thomas Allen Reed.*

## **Mediocre Men worse than useless for Reporter's Line.**

It has often been observed that if a man fails in every other business or profession, he buys a pair of spectacles and a birch, and turns schoolmaster ; and that to such a man, with little or no education himself, and with no training for his task, parents are found willing to commit the care of their children during the most important period of their lives. Not to the same extent, perhaps, but some-

what after the same fashion, many a young man who finds himself out of employment invests a few shillings in the purchase of a system of shorthand, and commences its study in the confident expectation of being able in a few weeks or months to earn a livelihood by reporting. I once heard of a young grocer who, being suddenly seized with a desire to quit the counter at which he had served for some years, and turn newspaper reporter, bought a popular stenographic manual, and expressed his intention of "persecuting" the system till his object was attained. He "persecuted" it indeed with great assiduity, but I believe he has never been heard of in the reporting world. I have been applied to by mechanics in fustian jackets, footmen arrayed in plush, and clerks out at elbow, for aid and counsel in the matter of a similar change of occupation, and have almost invariably recommended the applicants to "rest and be thankful" in their familiar employment rather than run the risk of inglorious failure in an untried sphere of labor. It would be absurd to say that a footman or a mechanic could never become a good reporter; but the chances are obviously against them.—(*T. A. Reed, Phonographic Reporter.*)

## **Good Natural Ability and Good Education Essential Qualifications for a Reporter.**

Properly to fulfil the duties of a reporter requires good natural abilities, and, to say the least, a tolerably good education. Persons not possessed of these advantages, would, as a rule, be ill-prepared to meet the exigencies of a reporter's life. They might possibly obtain occasional employment in some subordinate department of reporting work, but they would, in all probability, earn less by it than at their own special calling. I do not wish to be understood as disparaging the practice of the art of reporting by young men of all classes. I hope to be able to demonstrate the advantages of this practice in the way of mental development. But there is a great difference between amateur and professional reporting. The former may be made a pleasing pursuit, and will be found useful to all who



practise it with moderate care and industry ; the latter can never be followed by an uneducated person without discredit to himself and his employers ; for even if by means of considerable practice, he should acquire a fair amount of stenographic power, he will always be liable to blunders of the most absurd character in the transcription of his notes for the press.

The want of education may often, to a great extent, be supplied by unusually good natural abilities, which, under favourable circumstances, will overcome almost any obstacle, but where these are wanting, the chances of success are slender indeed. Imagine a dull, uninformed person taking his seat at a reporter's table, to take notes of a scientific lecture, rapidly delivered, and abounding in difficult words. I have known persons of average attainments fail in such a task, not because of their inability to follow the speaker pretty closely, but from the difficulty of making an accurate, intelligible transcript, which should be fit for the press. How then will our not very bright friend succeed ? Or suppose him to report an historical address, full of proper names, of which he knows as much as his note-book ; these names are a serious stumbling-block, and in the effort to give them stenographic expression, he probably misses considerable portions of the sentences in which they occur, and thus loses the advantage of the context. Hence if he ventures upon a transcript of his notes, it will probably be utterly unfit for publication. It is true that a well-informed reporter will at times be at a loss in such matters ; but he will have sense enough to omit what is doubtful or obscure, or will know the books to which he can refer in order to rectify errors or supply omissions. Not so the other ; unaware of the extent of his own ignorance, totally unconscious of his mistakes, he will blunder through his notes, and present his readers with a mass of unconnected sentences completely bewildering to an ordinary intellect—a caricature rather than a faithful representation of the speaker's words. Especially will this be the case if the speaker is careless in his style, if his sentences are involved and intricate, or if his utterance is not very distinct. Add to all this a subject involving a variety of

technical details ; what kind of report can a dull, uneducated person be expected to supply under circumstances so disadvantageous ? And if unable to give a full report, what shall be said of a condensation ? The unfortunate scribe has not thoroughly understood half of what he has heard ; how then shall he present an intelligible *resume* of it to his reader ?

I have said enough to show that good natural abilities and a tolerably good education are essential qualifications for a reporter. Without these he will have great difficulty in at once seizing the salient points of an address, and will run the risk, if called upon for a condensed report, of retaining unimportant, and omitting important parts ; especially if, as will often be the case, the transcript has to be made in haste. A long speech or lecture is reported at night ; the paper perhaps goes to press in a few hours, and a report of a couple of columns is required. There is barely time to perform the mechanical operation of writing so much ; no time therefore must be lost in poring over the notes and thinking of the various points to be preserved ; the thought must keep pace with the pen. Do not think of leaning back in your chair, shutting your eyes, and composing yourself for deliberation as to what you are to write and what to omit. The familiar imp is at your elbow, and reminds you that "the printers are waiting for copy." But your notes are indistinct ; you could not hear well ; you have a bad head-ache, the subject was a difficult one. Unfortunate reporter ! The press is imperious ; the public takes no note of these things ; take up your pen again, you must not stop even to think, for "the printers are waiting for copy." →(*Ibid.*)

## **The Precise Amount of Education Needed by a Newspaper Reporter.**

It is of course impossible to state the precise amount of education needed by a newspaper reporter ; but it is not difficult to indicate the subjects on which he should possess a moderate amount of information. I have seen it gravely stated that nothing less than a

university education is required to fit the reporter for the varied duties of his calling. If this were the case, very few reporters could lay claim to competency. Not one in twenty, even among those employed on first-class journals, has had the benefit of a university training ; and comparatively few can boast of a good classical education. It is needless to say that these advantages cannot fail to secure to their possessor a greater measure of success than he could hope to attain without them ; but it is quite a mistake to suppose that they are indispensable to the reporter. I have known excellent classical scholars who have made very indifferent reporters ; and could point to many of the most expert and intelligent members of the craft who never construed a line of Virgil, and could not go "through a tense \* \* to save their lives.—(*Ibid.*)

### Linguistic Attainments.

A knowledge of Latin cannot be otherwise than serviceable to the reporter. In almost every kind of public oratory Latin quotations now and then occur, though less frequently than in former years, and the ability to write them down as uttered, or so much of them as will afford the means of reference to the source whence they have been taken, will always be a valuable acquisition. The best informed reporter may now and then find himself compelled to seek the assistance of the speaker as to some unfamiliar quotation, or some technical expression ; but to be obliged to ask his aid in the matter of a common-place quotation or phrase which the merest smattering of Latin would suffice to render intelligible,—this is a position in which no intelligent reporter with any amount of self-respect would willingly place himself. Still less will he venture on transcribing the words from his notes, however accurately he may appear to have caught them, if he does not know their meaning or is not perfectly assured as to their orthography. It is true that a brother reporter is sometimes at hand who can give the requisite assistance, and there is commonly sufficient *esprit de corps* among the members of the fraternity to lead them to lend a helping hand in case of need ; but even such aid is not always available, and the result is that the un-

informed reporter is compelled to omit a quotation which he would have gladly preserved, or he may be betrayed into some such perversion of the words as an American scribe is said to have perpetrated when a member of Congress said, "*Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed major veritas*," which, to the speaker's utter bewilderment, was rendered in a newspaper on the following day, "I may cuss Plato, I may cuss Socrates, said Major Veritas!" If, however, Latin has not been acquired in youth, it is almost hopeless to expect that any great proficiency in the language will be attained at a later period in life. But every reporter, if he does not delay the effort till business or family cares and responsibilities engross the time not occupied in his professional labors, may and ought to acquire at least the elements of the language, and to familiarize himself with the Latin quotations which are constantly met with in both reading and speaking. This will involve no great labor, and it will well repay whatever mental exertion it may cost. \*

The most useful modern language is unquestionably French and I strongly recommend its acquisition to everyone who desires to qualify himself for the duties of a reporter. I do not mean that he should necessarily aim at speaking and writing the language, but he should at least be able to read it with tolerable ease. Now and then he may find himself face to face with a French speaker, who has asked and obtained permission to address the assembly in his own language; and it will be no little satisfaction to him to be able to give a report, if only a short summary, of such a speech, instead of dismissing it with the bald announcement that "M. Provost then addressed the meeting in French."

With regard to Greek,\* I think every reporter should at any rate

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\* *Professor Blackie and the Reporters*.—One night while lecturing in Edinburgh, Professor Blackie glanced kindly at his friends of the press, and said: "It will be unnecessary for the reporters to take notes. I am going to read my lecture from manuscript, and this will be at their command at the end of my remarks." This was all that the newspaper men could desire, for the subject was an extremely technical one. The Professor was as good as his word; at the end of his lecture he handed the manuscript to the reporters and then to their dismay

learn the alphabet, and a few of the common roots that enter so largely into the composition of scientific terms. These can be acquired with but little labor, and the knowledge will assuredly prove serviceable.—(*Ibid.*)

## Historical Knowledge.

One of the most important branches of knowledge which the reporter can cultivate is history. Many allusions are made in speeches to historical events and personages, which would greatly embarrass a reporter ignorant of them. Every reporter should of course be familiar with the history of his own country, and not altogether unacquainted with that of foreign countries, ancient and modern. He should also know the names at least of the principal authors in the various departments of science and literature; and whatever information he may be able to acquire on the subjects of which they treat, cannot fail to be serviceable to him in his profession. A reporter should seek to be somewhat informed on a large number of subjects, even at the risk of his knowledge being but superficial, rather than pursue only two or three studies. It is impossible, unless he be an Admirable Crichton, that his knowledge should be at once deep and varied; and for professional purposes he will find even a smattering of many subjects far more useful than a profound acquaintance with a few.—(*Ibid.*)

## Familiarity with the Political and other Questions of the Day.

Especially should a reporter be cognizant of the important events passing around him, in his own and other countries. To this end he should be a diligent reader of the newspapers. In these days of telegraphs and special correspondents, he need be at no loss in regard to current history. Allusions to passing events, both at home and

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they discovered that every word of it was written in Greek. For once the fourth estate was sold; but they had their revenge in the morning. The Professor had three lines devoted to him.—(*Phonetic Journal*)

abroad, are so frequent in public addresses of all kinds, especially in those of a political character, that a reporter would be continually at fault who should not be familiar with them. Besides, as a contemporary historian himself, as the reporter has rightly been called, it would be positively shameful if he suffered himself to be ignorant of the history of the world beyond his own immediate locality.—(*Ibid.*)

### Legal Knowledge.

A little legal knowledge is indispensable to most reporters. This, however, they can hardly fail to acquire in the course of their professional practice. They are frequently required to attend law courts; and in order to be able to furnish accurate and intelligible reports, it is necessary that they should understand somewhat of the forms of legal proceedings, and the principal technical terms employed in connection with them.—(*Ibid.*)

### A Good Physique.

Not the least important qualification for a reporter is a good physical constitution. The profession of a reporter is in many respects a laborious one, and it should never be adopted by persons who are unable to bear a considerable amount of bodily fatigue. A reporter has sometimes to take full notes of a meeting or a trial for six or seven hours or more, without intermission. This is not only a trying exercise of the mental faculties, but it is a severe task for the bodily powers, to which no man would be equal who did not possess the *mens sana in corpore sano*. In busy seasons many reporters work fourteen or fifteen hours a day, and if this is continued for weeks together, with occasional sitting up through the night, even a robust constitution will have to summon all its power of endurance to its aid.—(*Ibid.*)

### Facility of Composition.

This is a necessity to the reporter who hopes to excel in his profession. Not only is it required in the remodelling and

condensation of speeches, but in the descriptive accounts which the reporter is often called upon to give of noteworthy events occurring in his locality. One day he is required to describe the opening of a public building, the next to give an account of a boat race. Now he attends an agricultural show, then a volunteer review. Look at the columns of his paper headed "Local Intelligence," and observe the titles of the various paragraphs which he has had to pen during the week in addition to his ordinary reporting: "Violent hail-storm," "Railway accident," "Concert at the Assembly Rooms," "Horticultural show," "A drunken frolic," "Exhibition of pictures," and the like. It requires an amount of skill and experience little suspected outside the walls of a newspaper office, to collect information on such a variety of subjects, and to present it to the public in an intelligible form.—(*Ibid.*)

### Caligraphy.

I must not omit to mention among the requisite qualifications for a reporter, a clear and legible style of longhand writing. This is of greater importance than is generally imagined. Very many reporters write an ugly and illegible scrawl, and it is very true that a continual, rapid transcription from shorthand notes has a tendency to render the writing slovenly and careless in style; but this tendency should be resisted. Compositors are said to be able to read anything, but that is no reason why their powers should be always kept on the stretch. Printers expect to be paid, and often are paid, more for setting from bad "copy" than from clear; and hence, if for no other reason, everyone engaged in a literary way should seek to acquire a legible style of writing. Of this we are quite sure, that a reporter who writes a neat and legible hand, will, *cæteris paribus*, have a much better chance of procuring an engagement than one who cannot furnish so good a specimen of longhand caligraphy.—(*Ibid.*)

### Qualifications specially prized in Reporters.

"Can you recommend me a good reporter?" said an editor of a

country paper to me a few weeks ago ; " I have had no fewer than six during the last twelve months, and not one of them suits me."

" I am afraid," I said, " that you are not easily satisfied, or you are not sufficiently liberal in your remuneration. Do you want an Admirable Crichton at thirty shillings a week ? "

" Not at all," replied my friend ; " I am neither unreasonable in my requirements, nor mean in my scale of payment. I offer £120 a year to begin with, with the prospect of a gradual advance say up to £200 for a really good hand."

" May I ask what your difficulty has been ? What have been the special shortcomings of the reporters whom you have tried ? "

" They have been various. My first reporter came to me with fair recommendations, and I expected great things from him. He was a fairly skilful shorthand writer, and a pattern of industry. I have known him sit up all night writing out his notes when there was not the slightest occasion for it. I believe he would have filled the paper with his reports every week without grumbling. But he could never summarize. He prided himself upon his literal exactness, and it was a positive grief to him to omit a single sentence. As to fusing three or four sentences into one he was simply incapable of the task ; and you might as well have asked him to review a Sanscrit grammar as to give a neat *resume* of a long speech. Remonstrances were in vain. One day, just as we were going to press, he brought me two columns of matter which were utterly useless, though I should have been really glad of a quarter of the quantity an hour or two earlier. This led to a rupture, and our connection ceased. I was so disgusted with these long and dreary reports that it was almost a relief to me to find that the next reporter I engaged could not write shorthand at all, but managed to do his work with an abbreviated longhand ; he was a good paragraph writer, and was in many other respects a useful hand in a newspaper office. Knowing nothing of shorthand, he affected to despise it (a common occurrence



I have noticed among reporters), and his reports were generally sent in in a very summary form. In most cases they suited me well; but now and then when some celebrity came among us whom it was desirable to report very fully, I had the mortification of seeing a rival paper come out with reports twice as long as my own. This led to many grumblings, and I was obliged, I confess reluctantly, to give the reporter his *conge*. His successor was a good shorthand writer, and knew how to summarize when necessary; he was also a good descriptive writer, and was great at a boat race or an agricultural show, and if he had only been a teetotaler he would have been a decided acquisition. At the first public dinner he attended for the paper he became so "over-stimulated" that he scarcely wrote a line that was intelligible, and the result was that I had to apply to another reporter to supply me with a report. On another occasion, when returning from a meeting which he had attended in the country, he had the misfortune—so he called it—to lose his notebook. I was waiting anxiously for his arrival as we were on the eve of going to press; but when he walked into the office he told me very confidentially of his misadventure with his notes, then staggered into my chair and fell fast asleep. He signed the pledge three or four times, but only to break it within a week. I could never depend upon him; the uncertainty of his movements made me positively ill. I resolved to make strict sobriety a *sine qua non* in any future engagement I might make. My wishes in this respect were abundantly gratified; for the next reporter whom I engaged was a strict teetotaler and a vegetarian, with as many crotchets and *isms* as the most enthusiastic reformer (political, social, and dietetic) could desire. He was a short, pale young man with very long hair, and wrote poetry of the deeply metaphysical kind. As a reporter, I am bound to say he was in every respect *slow*; a rapid speaker would leave him a long way behind; and though—to do him justice—he could condense a speech moderately well, it was a work of considerable time and labor. He was utterly deficient in *dash*, and was incapable of making any special efforts to meet the exigencies of a paper just going to press. I could have borne with this if he had not set his mind on converting

me to some of his pet notions. Never a week passed that he did not give me some little tract about the benefits of early rising, or the evils of tea and coffee drinking, or some more recondite subject for review in my paper. If a travelling lecturer came into the town to deliver an address on the most out-of-the-way topic he was sure to be there, and if I was not careful, there would be a report next week of a couple of columns of dreary talk that nobody cared to read. Happily for me, this worthy young man was promoted to the editorial chair of a magazine which feebly flickered for a few months and then went out. He was succeeded by the best reporter I ever had ; but, poor fellow, he was consumptive, and was obliged to leave through illness before he had been with me three months.

"And now," continued my friend, "you know something of the difficulties with which I have had to contend. During the last fortnight I have had to do most of the reporting myself, and I am getting tired of the work. Besides which (to be candid), I am not out for it. You know now the sort man I want. He must be steady, sober, and trustworthy ; he must be intelligent and well-informed ; he must be a good shorthand writer ; he must be able to condense well and, if need be, rapidly ; he must be a good descriptive writer ; he must not be a pronounced social or psychological reformer (I will be bored with no more pamphlets) ; and he must have a good physique."

"If there are any other little qualifications that you would like to throw in," I said, "say as to age, height, complexion, or manners, you had better name them at once, so that I may know your requirements exactly."

"True," said my friend, laughing ; "and now that you mention manners that reminds me of one thoroughly indispensable requisite—a gentlemanly bearing and appearance. I cannot have my paper represented by a man who is out-at-elbows, and keeps his nails in deep mourning. I seldom see a reporters' table now-a-days that has not one or two men around it whose seedy appearance is a disgrace to a respectable profession. I abominate a swell or a dandy ; you must

find me a quiet dressing, gentlemanly fellow who has moved in good society, and won't compromise the respectability of the paper."

"Is there anything else?" I said.

"No, think not. What I want is *a good all-round man*. Get me one, and I shall be eternally grateful."

And what about the "all-round man?" I am sorry to say I have not yet found him. The few persons whom I know at all answering to the description which my friend gave me are comfortably located, and not likely to change: they are men who are accomplished short-hand writers, can condense well, and write a descriptive article with facility; men who are thoroughly trustworthy, of temperate habits, and gentlemanly bearing.

I have given a somewhat detailed report of our conversation with the view mainly of bringing before my younger readers the qualifications which are specially prized by newspaper conductors, and the particular weaknesses or disqualifications which render reporters unfit for the fulfilment of their duties. Nothing is more common than to hear a newspaper proprietor or editor say, "Smith is a capital hand, a thoroughly competent reporter but we cannot depend upon him; we are never sure that he is at his post;" or, "Brown is a very steady and trustworthy fellow, but he is terribly slow, and if he has anything to report out of the ordinary course, he makes a complete hash of it." If a reporter desires to advance in his profession he should endeavor to familiarise himself with *all* its varied duties, and not be content with running in one groove all the days of his life. I have known reporters who are never at home except when reporting inquests; others are only happy in the police court; some make a speciality of fires; others of sermons or religious meetings.

Of course it may well be, as in the case of every profession, that particular departments will be best filled by particular men; but the

most valued hands will always be those who can take a wide range of duty. A narrow limit is never desirable. I have known very excellent professional shorthand writers whose ordinary practice has been in the law courts, not by any means the easiest kind of reporting, and who have shrunk with a feeling of something like dismay from work of a different and far easier kind. One of this class told me that nothing distressed him so much as taking notes at a public meeting; and I believe that he would not undertake to report a sermon for any consideration: and this not owing to any want of capacity, but simply because he had rarely employed his pen for such purposes. A moderate amount of practice would have given him a reasonable facility in these and other departments; but he scarcely ever wielded his pen outside Lincoln's Inn, or Westminster Hall. Another excellent reporter told me that he shrunk from nothing so much as a scientific lecture; and perhaps to one unaccustomed to this kind of reporting there is no department of the profession more uninviting: indeed, on some subjects it is next to impossible to report a speaker satisfactorily without some special knowledge of the technical terms employed. I do not mean that it is necessary to make a study of these subjects; but the reporter should have just sufficient acquaintance with them to be able to follow a speaker in his mind as well as with his pen, and to be familiar at any rate with most of the words he is likely to employ. I know a case in which a reporter attended a clinical lecture delivered at one of the metropolitan hospitals for the purpose of taking it down shorthand. He wrote as far as the words: "Gentlemen, the subject of our lecture to-day is—" and there he stopped! I do not remember the subject: perhaps it was "hyperinosis," or "hepatitis," or "emphysema;" but whatever it was, the word rather rapidly pronounced staggered him so completely that he closed his book and did not write another sentence.

—(*Ibid.*)

## **A Reporter must keep his intellectual culture at a high standard, Extending over a wide range of subjects.**

It is said, and truly, that the reporter deals with a very wide range of subjects : the result naturally is that the knowledge which he manages to pick up is of a superficial character. He runs the risk of knowing a little about everything, and not much about anything. His daily calling makes him familiar with the ordinary topics of the day, gives him, perhaps, a smattering of science, or theology, and the rest ; but unless he is a reading as well as a writing man, that is, unless he studies like ordinary mortals, his intellectual culture will be worth very little.

Many a young reporter is quite contented with the knowledge thus acquired, and never gives a moment's thought to serious study. This danger of superficiality of knowledge is a real, not an imaginary, one. For ordinary reporting purposes nothing more, perhaps, is required ; but no one should be satisfied with a mere minimum of attainments just sufficient for his daily duties. It may be said that there is nothing peculiar in a reporter's life in reference to this matter—that those who follow any other calling are just as likely to neglect their opportunities, and be content with a mere school routine of education. But I think there is something peculiar in it. A reporter's occupation is, to some extent, a literary one, and the very fact that he is pursuing a literary career is apt to lead the reporter to think that he is doing all that is necessary in the way of culture, and to neglect opportunities of acquiring knowledge of which, perhaps, if he followed some other calling, he might avail himself.—(*Ibid.*)

## **A Reporter "writing up" or "writing down" public men to order hardly consistent with high moral rectitude.**

The reporter is sometimes expected to give a tinge to his

reports according to the politics of the paper which he represents. I do not mean simply that he is to report the favourite speakers of the paper, that is, the speakers representing its own politics, more fully than others—there is nothing wrong or unnatural in that—but that he is tempted, if he wishes to please his employers, to report the other side in such a way as to bring ridicule or discredit upon it. The habit of “writing up” or “writing down,” to order, is hardly consistent with high moral rectitude. I do not say that every reporter is called upon to do it, but there are few who find themselves able to give absolutely colorless or impartial reports under all circumstances. I do not refer to the mere reports of speeches so much as to the descriptive matter which usually accompanies them. This often takes its color from the politics of the paper, and has little or nothing to do with the predilections of the reporter himself. It is, perhaps, as well that a reporter should have no very pronounced political views, so that he may the more readily adapt himself, without doing violence to his feelings, to the particular paper on which he may be employed ; if he happen to entertain strong opinions on political questions he may have to smother them to an extent that will be anything but pleasant. It may be said that in what he writes he is but acting as the instrument of those who employ him, and that he has no right to take his own personal views into consideration. The same thing is urged in extenuation of the conduct of an editor who is alternately, and sometimes simultaneously, Conservative and Liberal, and writes strictly to order. It is said that he is doing no more than a barrister does every day in accepting briefs without any regard to his opinion on the legality of the proposition he is expected to maintain. This specious kind of argument will hardly reconcile the conscientious man to writing, whether as editor or reporter, in opposition to his own views, and I cannot help thinking that the habit of writing one thing while thinking another, or even without thinking at all, has a demoralizing tendency. I know that there are many situations where this risk is not run, where there is only reporting pure and simple to be done ; but there are certainly

many in which it is difficult to steer clear of this embarrassment.  
—(*Ibid.*)

## **Defective hearing or mis-hearing, fruitful source of ridiculous Mistakes.**

Hearing is as essential to reporting as sight ; and it goes without saying that a deaf reporter is an impossibility : I mean, of course totally deaf. Partially deaf reporters one does occasionally meet with, but the wonder is how they manage to get through their work. They often receive assistance from their more fortunate brethren, who, of course, are in most cases willing to supply their need.

I have very rarely been troubled with deafness, but once or twice my hearing has been slightly affected after taking cold. The discomfort of such a state is always great, but the annoyance it produces when note taking is extreme. There is a constant strain to catch what usually falls easily on the ear, and a dread of losing an important word or phrase which cannot be well supplied. Sometimes one ear alone is affected, and in such cases the reporter naturally selects a seat where the other ear will be chiefly employed, and will take care to be as near the speaker as possible.

No one who suffers habitually from deafness should think of following reporting as a profession. But it sometimes happens that the deafness comes on after the choice has been made, and when it is not easy to make a change of occupation. In such case one can hardly recommend the reporter to abandon a profession in which he perhaps has been successful and is earning a good income, and begin the world afresh. But of course where the deafness is serious and obstinate, reporting is simply out of the question. For verbatim work, especially, the hearing should be perfect. It is often difficult to hear a fairly good speaker, but where the tone is low and the articulation imperfect, the effort to catch the words is painful even to a quick ear, and to one only slightly deaf is a simple impossibility.

I once heard a speaker, as I thought, use the phrase "timber of Memel," which was utter nonsense, and I had to puzzle a long time before I could even guess what the words actually were. A sudden inspiration suggested "temple of Mammon," and as these words made the sentence perfectly intelligible I adopted them. On another occasion I wrote "overtax," which nearly overtaxed my powers of comprehension. I had obviously mis-heard the word, and a careful study of the context showed me that "overt acts" were probably the words that were uttered. But the most curious case of mis-hearing I have ever met within my own practice occurred to me not long ago. A speaker, who was not very accurate in his pronunciation, was reciting some lines of his own composition in which occurred the words, as I heard them,

"Watching from the Roman eye."

I knew, of course, that I was wrong, but I adopted the plan I always follow of writing down exactly the words as they reach the ear, however absurd they may be. These were obviously not the words of the poet orator. Instead of poring over them and trying to solve the almost inscrutable problem which they presented, I asked the speaker to lend me the manuscript from which he had been reading; and there, to my intense amusement, I discovered that the words were,

"Watching from their home on high !"

I was at first disposed to blame myself, but on reflection I was, and still am, perfectly convinced that *I heard correctly*, and that the fault was with the speaker, who must have been "aitchless" to the last degree. I have no doubt that many mis-hearings, so to call them, arise in the same way, that is from the mispronunciation, or the imperfect vocalization, of the speaker. In many instances the error may not be detected, there being nothing in the context to show that the words as written are not the correct ones; and in such cases the blame generally falls on the reporter instead of on the speaker, to whom it properly belongs. I do not, of course, deny that there are cases in which the reporter has been at fault, *e.g.*, when the Latin phrase *uno flatu* was rendered "you know flatu;"



and *ad rem* was converted into "had rum;" and "a goose and a goat" was transformed into "a good Sunday coat." "An ever-varying scene" might, unless the context plainly indicated the right words, be rendered "A never varying scene." "The Countess of Ayr" was once written in an official report of parliamentary evidence instead of "County Surveyor." Most speakers (not being West of England men) would pronounce both exactly alike, and the mistake, from a mere phonic point of view, is intelligible enough. I remember a witness once saying, "My brother was home by three o'clock; I was home by four," or "before." Which he meant I did not know, and I do not know to this day whether I gave a correct interpretation of his evidence. I remember the word "literal" being written instead of "littoral." Possibly the latter word was strange to the reporter, but the context clearly required it. "What do the Turks want? To be a nation," said a speaker in Parliament. "To be in Asia," wrote the reporter, and the words were so printed. "Attendees of clubs," in the mouth of Mr Bright, was transformed into "vendors of gloves." And the latter part of the statement that "all reforms in this country have been brought about by pressure" was reported, "brought about by Prussia."

When an absurd and obviously wrong word or phrase reaches the ear it is of no use to stop and think, even for a second or two, what it should be: the only safe method is to write precisely what is heard, no matter how ridiculous it may be. If the hand hesitates, the pen may fall behind the speaker; and if a blank is left for the doubtful word or sentence, when the reporter comes to transcribe his notes, he may no longer remember the impression that was made upon his ear, which was probably *approximately* accurate, and would, on a little reflection, suggest the right interpretation. Indeed, while the reporter is in the act of taking notes, the doubt may be removed: *solvitur scribendo*. The speaker may use the same phrase again, and this time the sounds are clearly uttered and accurately heard; or even without this help the true reading may flash upon the mind, as I have said, by a kind of inspiration.

## **Atrocious nonsense, the result of the mind and the hand not travelling together.**

It need hardly be said that mis-hearings are much less likely to occur when the mind goes with the hand, and it is intent upon following the meaning as well as the words of the speaker, than they are when the mind is wandering, and leaving the fingers to do their mechanical work without the friendly guidance of the brain. I have often written the most atrocious nonsense in this way, and I doubt not the experience is common enough. The mistakes will generally reveal themselves in the work of transcription ; but there is a danger, if they are not very obvious, of their going uncorrected. The moral of which is, that the reporter should attend to sense and sound alike. It is not always an easy task. In following a long and prosy speech it requires a considerable effort to keep the mind from wandering to other topics : while in taking notes of a very technical, or metaphysical address, it is often not only difficult, but impossible, to follow with exactness the speaker's train of thought. But the effort should be made if extreme verbal accuracy is needed. It is not surprising that a reporter, writing mechanically, should convert the sentence, "Pew-rates are the greatest enemies of the Church," into "*Curates* are the greatest enemies of the Church." But it is hardly conceivable that the mistake should have been made if the mind and the hand travelled together. The error, however, was not only made in note-taking, but, I believe, also in transcribing.

There is no doubt that scores of similar mistakes, arising from the same cause, are daily made, and that a curious collection in this branch of literature might be made by those given to such labors.—(*Ibid.*)

## **Lord Campbell on the Essentials of Reporting.**

Shorthand writers are very useful in taking down evidence as given in a court of justice, but they are wholly incompetent to report a good speech. They attend to words without entering into the thoughts of the speaker. They cannot by any means take down at

full length all that is uttered by a speaker of ordinary rapidity, and if they did, they would convey a very imperfect notion of the spirit and effect of the speech. With the exception of Pitt the younger, there probably never was a parliamentary debater in whose language there was not some inaccuracy, and who did not fall into occasional repetitions. These are hardly perceived in the rapid stream of extemporaneous eloquence, and are corrected and remedied by the voice, the eye, the action of him to whom we listen ; but blazoned on a printed page which we are deliberately to peruse, they would offend and perplex us. If Pitt could have been taken down *verbatim*, all his sentences, however long and involved, would have been found complete and grammatical, and the whole oration methodical and finished, but it would have been sometimes stiff and cumbrous and vapid, although, animated by his delivery, it has electrified the House. Nay, if he himself had written it for publication, it would probably have been much altered. No man knew better the difference between what is permitted in speaking and in writing. . . . . To have a good report of a speech, the reporter must thoroughly understand the subject discussed, and be qualified to follow the reasoning, to feel the pathos, and relish the wit, and to be warmed by the eloquence of the speaker. He must apprehend the whole scope of the speech, as well as attend to the happy phraseology in which the ideas of the speaker are expressed. He should take down notes in abbreviated longhand as rapidly as he can for aids to his memory. He must then retire to his room, and, looking at these, recollect the speech as it was delivered, and give it with all fidelity, point and spirit, as the speaker would write it out if preparing it for the press. Fidelity is the first and indispensable requisite, but this does not demand an exposure of inaccuracies and repetitions. I cannot conceive a more improving exercise than this for a young man who aspires to be an orator. It is well to translate the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero ; but it would be still better, if the opportunity existed, to report the orations of a Chatham and a Burke.\*

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\*There is much that is sensible and much that is absurd in this deliverance of Lord Campbell.—(T. A. Reed.)

## **Distinctness of utterance a cardinal virtue of a public speaker.**

As to delivery, it need hardly be said that, from the reporter's point of view, one of the cardinal virtues of a speaker—I might almost say the primal virtue—is distinctness of utterance. No other excellence will compensate for the absence of this. A speaker may be slow and deliberate, may express himself in unexceptional English, and be in all other respects easy to report ; but if he has not acquired the art of making himself distinctly heard, he will be assuredly unpopular with those who have to report his speeches. This characteristic is also appreciated by the general public, who naturally like to hear a man speak clearly, but they are not so fastidious in this respect as the reporter, nor are they such good judges. If a speaker speaks rather loudly, and makes himself fairly intelligible, it is of little consequence to an ordinary hearer that he now and then drops his voice, say at the end of a sentence ; to the reporter, the end may be everything. After writing a long and perhaps complicated sentence, which is evidently leading up to the completion of some suspended idea, nothing is more aggravating than to fail to catch the very words which are essential to express the speaker's meaning—a failure which renders it necessary for the reporter to omit the entire passage, or (which is not always an easy matter), to make a guess at what the speaker meant.—(*T. A. Reed.*)

## **A clear crisp articulation, the Essence of distinctness.**

When I speak of distinctness I do not, of course, mean mere loudness. A loud voice may be a very indistinct one, sometimes indeed indistinct because of the loudness. The essence of distinctness is a clear, crisp articulation. With some speakers the vowels absolutely drown the consonants, which have thus no opportunity of asserting themselves ; and the result is (as in the case of a badly articulated song) that the hearers have but a vague conception of

the words that are uttered. A good deal also depends upon pitch. I have heard speakers laboring hard to make themselves clearly heard by a large audience, but to very little purpose : they have been speaking in their ordinary tone of voice, and straining every nerve after a distinct utterance ; but their pitch has been too low ; a very little elevation would have made them more audible with much less exertion. I have known speakers with extremely weak voices make themselves well heard in large rooms by simply attending to pitch and clear articulation.—(*Ibid.*)

### **Delivery not too rapid or the style too difficult.**

When a speaker has a distinct articulation combined with a clear strong voice, the reporter who has to follow him is in Elysium that is, if the utterance is not too rapid, or the style of composition too difficult. The combination, however, is rare. It has a very striking example in Mr Spurgeon, who without apparent effort, makes himself distinctly heard at the farthest end of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. To a clear, ringing, musical voice he adds an almost perfect articulation ; and the shorthand writer must be hard to please who complains of him as being difficult to follow ; I mean as far as hearing is concerned. Canon Liddon is another illustration of the kind of elocution I have been speaking of. Preaching under the dome of St. Pauls, his voice, clear and rich, penetrates the most distant aisles of the great cathedral, where the tones of an ordinary speaker would die away unheard, save as faint reverberations. Canon Farrar also has an excellent voice, but it is certainly not so melodious as either Mr Spurgeon's or Canon Liddon's. Still keeping to the pulpit, I may mention Dr Chown, of Bloomsbury Chapel, as possessing one of the strongest voices I have ever heard. He might be reported a quarter of a mile away ; but heard close at hand, his utterance is extremely harsh and unmusical. Among parliamentary speakers Mr Gladstone is one of the clearest and most distinct. I have heard him speak at open-air meetings—which are

very trying to most orators—and, though at some little distance from him, have caught every syllable with the greatest ease.—(*Ibid.*)

## Reporting Judges and Counsel—a trying work.

In the courts of law there are but few really good elocutionists. Accustomed to address only a jury of twelve persons, a judge, or at most a bench of judges, the barrister has no need to raise his voice and cultivate the art of appealing to the multitude. Indeed, as he has often to speak for many hours at a time, in elaborating a long argument he has every reason to economize his vocal powers, and therefore, only speaks just loudly enough to be heard by those whom he is immediately addressing. This often makes it a difficult task for the shorthand writer to report his words, if, as sometimes happens, he is not very conveniently placed for catching them. There is hardly a judge on the bench who has a thoroughly good delivery, and not a few are sadly deficient in this respect. Earl Cairns is one of the best. At the bar he was very distinct, and the stenographer who could keep up to his speed had an easy task in reporting him. The late Lord Westbury was also, when at the bar, an admirably clear and precise speaker, and as he was deliberate as well, the shorthand writer had very little difficulty in recording his words. When on the bench he spoke with the same deliberation, but not with the same distinctness. Lord Selborne was well heard if the reporter was not too distant; his voice was not strong, but his delivery was good. He is still a good speaker, but is not quite so distinctly heard as in former days. The late Lord Cockburn, Chief Justice of England, was an excellent elocutionist, and when he was at the bar it was a treat to listen to his address to a jury. I remember, many years ago, reporting his speeches in the celebrated Palmer trial. I was at some distance from him, but heard every word with the greatest distinctness. When elevated to the bench he followed the example of most other judges, and spoke in a lower tone, which I suppose is adopted as best fitting judicial calmness and decorum. Some judges, instead of speaking clearly, absolutely mumble, and to report them is one of the most difficult tasks that fall to the lot of the shorthand writer.

A judge's summing-up or judgment, even his *obiter dicta*, must be taken down with the greatest care and accuracy. The shorthand notes are often cited in subsequent proceedings, and the mistake of a single word may cause serious embarrassment. But how can the desired accuracy be secured if the occupant of the bench speaks in a low tone of voice, and does not clearly articulate his words ? The most feeble speaker at present on the Bench is unquestionably Vice-Chancellor Bacon, whom it is impossible to hear at a few yards' distance ; indeed, so great is the difficulty of catching his words that no shorthand writer attempts to report his judgments without standing in the "well," and placing his book immediately under the judge's desk, and even then many words, if not sentences, go unrecorded. Judges now and then complain of mistakes in shorthand writer's notes ; but they little know how much they themselves contribute to the errors by their indistinctness of utterance.—(*Ibid.*)

## An appeal from the Reporters.

A distinguished Scotch physician, who often spoke in public, once told me he had learned the useful lesson that if he wanted to be reported in the papers he must speak out ; and he certainly (whether for this reason or not I cannot say) had cultivated a very clear enunciation. If every public speaker would learn the same lesson, and make effective use of his vocal organs, our labors would be materially lightened, and our tempers less sorely tried. \* \*

One cannot expect every orator to be at Stentor or a Demosthenes ; but it is not unreasonable to ask that those who have to speak in public should do so in such a manner as to be clearly heard. And if this appeal may with justice be made to them by the public in general, with what increased force may it not be made by the long-suffering body of stenographers who, in being expected to give accurate reports of indistinct speeches, are in as bad plight as the unfortunate Israelites who were required to make bricks without straw !—(*Ibid.*)

## **Speed an important feature in a speaker's delivery.**

Another important feature in a speaker's delivery, but, as I have said, not the most important, even from the reporter's point of view, is speed. To the young stenographer, who is doing his best to acquire the skill of a "ready writer," it is the one absorbing consideration which outweighs every other. A public speaker is, in his eyes, a being who utters so many words a minute, and with whom it is his (the student's) one ambition to keep pace with pen or pencil. When he leaves his pupilage, he troubles himself comparatively little about an orator's speed, not because he has acquired the requisite manipulative dexterity, but because he finds so many other difficulties in the way of practical reporting which far exceed that of quickness of utterance, and of which he has hardly dreamed in his earlier days. But whatever proficiency he may have attained he can never afford to disregard altogether this element in a speaker's delivery. If verbatim work comes within the scope of his employment, he will often find himself keeping up an exciting chase after a speaker whose words are rattled out with a velocity with which he must strain every nerve to keep pace. He may not perhaps trouble himself, as formerly, about the exact number of words the speaker speaks in a minute, but he will not affect a lordly indifference to rates of speed, or undertake "with a light heart" the task of reporting verbatim—say a sharp cross-examination in a law-court, or a rapidly delivered lecture on a difficult subject.—(*Ibid.*)

## **A quiet unimpassioned easy flowing speaker tries the mettle of the Reporter.**

But after all, there is no one who, as far as mere speed is concerned, so tries the mettle of the reporter as your quiet, unimpassioned, easy, flowing speaker, who speaks just loudly enough to make himself distinctly heard, and pursues the even tenor of his way without a pause, without emphasis, without anything that can check the



rapidity of his utterance. He has a good command of language, and has never to stop and think of the words he shall use ; they are always in readiness, and flow as glibly from the tongue as water runs from a tap. To an ordinary listener he does not appear to be at all a rapid speaker,—not half so rapid as the loud-speaking energetic orator to whom I have been referring. But, in truth, the shorthand writer would rather follow Boanerges for half a day than your quiet, glib, conversational speaker for half an hour. And the irritating part of the matter is that, while the unfortunate reporter is straining every nerve to keep pace with this scourge of his professional life, the work seems so provokingly easy. Perhaps the best discipline to which a member of our much tried profession can be subjected (I am still limiting my observations to the question of speed) is to find himself face to face with a speaker of this kind who, instead of speaking extemporaneously, chances to deliver say a long lecture from a manuscript, and does his best to crowd as much matter as he can into a given space of time. Unless the fingers are as supple and nimble as the tongue, and the shorthand forms at instant command, the stenographer is nowhere : he may pile on his grammalogues, pack his phraseograms into the smallest possible compass, extemporise every imaginable and unimaginable abbreviation, and concentrate his entire energy on his work, all to no purpose. The first hesitation, the least lagging behind, is fatal ; the scourge is away out of reach, and a big hiatus will disfigure the note-book. The experience is too often repeated, and the stenographer is disheartened if not humiliated—"cast down, but," happily, "not destroyed." He remembers that many "a forlorn and shipwrecked brother" has been stranded on the same beach, and so "takes heart again."—(*Ibid.*)

## Ease or difficulty in reporting largely depends on the structure or style of speeches.

Leaving the question of speed, I may now be permitted to say a few words on the structure or style of speeches, on which depends so largely the ease or difficulty of the reporter's task. Some speakers speak

with the accuracy of a written composition, and if they are reasonably deliberate, they are very popular with the reporting fraternity, who have nothing to do but carefully to record the uttered words and as carefully to transcribe them. The case is far otherwise (as I need hardly say to such an audience as this) with speakers whose style is loose, inaccurate, and ambiguous. Mere grammatical errors give the reporter very little concern, as they can be easily set right. The Archbishop of Granada tells Gil Blas, who had to copy some of his sermons, which were not always models of good composition, that he is "*trop bon copiste pour n'être pas grammarien*" (too good a copyist not to be a grammarian) and the same paradox might be applied to a reporter, who ought to be too good a note-taker and transcriber not to be able to write out grammatically. But what does harass and perplex him is an involved, complicated style in which the sentences seem to have no beginning or end, and in which it is almost impossible to say what relation the different clauses have to each other. It is cruel to impose upon a reporter the task of unravelling such a tangled skein of words as these sentences often present. If he transcribes his notes literally, the ambiguity will be laid at his door; if he tries to evolve meaning and form out of chaos, he may be told that he has misconceived the speakers and, like the too ambitious cobbler, has gone beyond his last. I think it may be safely assumed that a speaker who is not fairly intelligible to a good reporter must be a bad speaker, for he will certainly not be intelligible to the majority of his audience, unless indeed he happens to be speaking on a very technical subject to those who are perfectly familiar with it. It is not long sentences in themselves, or difficult words, that create embarrassment; it is intricate sentences that defy analysis that are the bane of the reporter's existence, and weigh upon him like a nightmare.

\* \* \* \*

Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright and Mr. Spurgeon, rarely utter involved and difficult sentences. Though Mr. Gladstone occasionally indulges in flights of oratory, his sentences read well, which cannot always be said of speakers who affect eloquence. I have taken many

a speech by Mr. Bright and Mr. Spurgeon without having to alter the position of a word. Such speakers will easily thread their way through a long and apparently intricate sentence, never losing the connection of the parts, and coming out at the end with logical and verbal accuracy. The late Chief Baron Kelly presented a striking example of this faculty, and I have often marvelled at the manner in which he exercised it. One of his long sentences, in summing up to a jury for instance, or in giving judgment on a case that had been argued before him, would occupy nearly a page of closely written notes, and the impression one had in taking it down was that the speaker had become hopelessly entangled, and would never extricate himself; but in transcribing the notes it became evident that there was no entanglement at all: there was, no doubt, a good deal of what seemed unnecessary verbiage, but the nominative was never without its verb; and no parenthesis, however long, was suffered to destroy the continuity of the sentence. Few speakers who indulge in long sentences can steer through them with such skill, and arrive at the destined end in safety. Many a sentence that one meets with in reporting is a complete *cul de sac*, leading nowhere, and is about as puzzling to the ordinary intellect as the lines of Alice's friend Humpty Dumpty,

And he was very proud and stiff;  
He said, "I'd go and wake them if—"

\* \* \* \*

And when I found the door was shut,  
I tried to turn the handle, but—

This provoking peculiarity of diction is, I suppose, as old as literature itself.—(*I bid.*)

### A Literal transcript of a speech a startling revelation but a serviceable discipline.

I think speakers might do worse than follow the example of a young clergyman who, many years ago, engaged me to take notes of

some of his sermons and supply him with a literal transcript of what he said, without any attempt to correct grammatical slips or complete unfinished sentences. His object was to have whatever defects there might be in his style brought distinctly before him, and I have no doubt that the method he adopted was both wise and useful. Some speakers would find the revelation a startling one, but the discipline would be serviceable, and the hearers would be benefitted. We do not desire that they should utter a word less (especially those of us who are paid by column or the folio), but if they will always let us hear what they do say, and say it, as happily many do, in clear and intelligible language, our gratitude to them ever great, will absolutely know no bounds.—(*Ibid.*)

### **Practice of short-hand and stupidity some times go together.**

Not many days ago, shortly after I had decided on taking this as the subject of my address, a friend said he wished to ask me a question in reference to shorthand, and this was his inquiry: "Do you ever find that the practice of your art develops anything like mental imbecility?" I thought he was poking his fun at me, and was about to reply in the same spirit. But there was no fun in my friend's face; he could not have looked more serious if I had asked him to lend me a five-pound note. He had had, it seems, one or two shorthand clerks with whose stenographic performances he was not altogether dissatisfied, but whose intellectual qualifications outside the range of their immediate duties were such as to lead him to make the singular inquiry I have mentioned. I thought on the topic of discourse which I had selected for the Shorthand Society, and began to think whether I had not better abandon it altogether. Shorthand as a mental exercise: development of imbecility. The conjunction was not promising, but then I bethought me of certain stupid folk I had met who were members of the learned professions, and of skilful artists and methanics I had known whose mental endowments were not of a high degree. I told my friend that I believed I could answer his question in the negative, but I was forced to admit that

the practice of shorthand and stupidity (I would not go so far as imbecility) did sometimes go together. And I suppose I must make the same admission now and here. But I take it that the same thing may be said with regard to every art and every calling. However calculated may be the art or the profession to develop the mental faculties it must never be forgotten that there will be persons who will embrace it without the necessary qualifications in the shape of average ability and a reasonably good education.

That this has been the case with shorthand some of us know only too well. I do not forget that my predecessor in this chair, in the abundance of his good nature, has told us that he thinks every reporter must be a clever fellow. Happily for the craft it is not every student of shorthand who becomes a reporter or a shorthand-writer, but even among those who attain to that dignity there are to be found persons of the slenderest acquirements—persons who have mistaken their vocation, and who never rise above the mere mechanics of the art they practise. I must assume for the purpose of my present address that shorthand is studied and practised intelligently, that the student is fairly well educated, and is desirous of continuing the cultivation of his intellectual faculties. Every art—painting, music, architecture, sculpture, and the rest—may be studied and practised mechanically, and in such a case the result will appear, at least to the true artist who throws his mind and soul into his work, as stale, flat, and unprofitable. Shorthand is no exception to the rule. The mere mechanician, if he succeed at all in his professional work, will be and remain at the bottom of the tree. It may seem to others a pity that the work should be undertaken by the ill-educated and slenderly-endowed, and in a sense it is so, but we must take things as they are. Our ranks, it is true, like those of other professions, contain a certain proportion of dullards who do no credit to us or to themselves. But this will not invalidate the proposition that I am going to lay down—that the study and practice of shorthand are calculated to stimulate the mental faculties (where they exist), and may be made the means of an admirable intellectual discipline.—(*Ibid.*)

## Slightest departure from the geometrical forms of Phonographic characters fraught with serious consequences.

The student cannot go far without discovering that the most serious consequences will ensue from the misplacement of a dot, that a wrong inclination of a stroke may turn an entire argument topsy-turvy, that a hook turned the wrong side or a circle elongated into an oval may spoil the finest peroration ever pronounced ; that the mere thickening of a stroke that should be light might so far affect the style of the composition as literally to change *pathos* into *bathos* ! All this is educational, both for the hand and the mind. Precision is the essence of shorthand, and the effort to acquire it is a discipline of great value. I know well enough that there are many who do not attain it, either because they do not give themselves the trouble or because they are wanting in the necessary faculty, but that does not disprove my assertion that the training is, as a rule, a serviceable one.—(*Ibid.*)

## Short-hand writers must dive deep in literature.

I have hitherto referred chiefly to the early efforts made to acquire a knowledge of the elements of shorthand. Let me now refer to what is involved in the practice required to attain even a moderate proficiency in the art. To this end the student needs a good deal of reading and writing, and he ought to benefit mentally by both. I am obliged to admit that much of the shorthand literature at his disposal is not of the highest class. Our best historians, poets, scientists, novelists, unfortunately do not contribute to our shorthand magazines ; but happily there are not wanting shorthand reprints of some of our choicest literary gems, which can be read for practice ; and in writing from dictation (a necessary task for every shorthand student) the whole field of English literature lies before him, and it must certainly be his own fault if he does not select something which will contribute to his intellectual improvement. A good

historical book is a capital exercise for the student. If he reads what he has written, as of course he ought to do, he goes through the same pages a second time, and thus gets them impressed upon his memory. The effort required to decipher indifferently-written characters, to supply the necessary vowels and other omitted letters, and to make sense of what he reads, is a mental exercise the value of which no one will dispute.—(*Ibid.*)

### **A short-hand writer and reporter's work is not mere word-taking.**

In actual shorthand work, taking notes, I mean, for a definite object, professional or otherwise (especially professional, the sense of responsibility being then the strongest), the mental faculties are necessarily called thoroughly into play. For the work of the shorthand-writer and reporter—it is necessary to repeat it, though it has been said a thousand times before—is not mere word-writing. To do his work at all satisfactorily the reporter must follow the ideas, as well as the language, of the speaker. If he does not do this always when in the act of taking notes it is indispensable that he should do it when transcribing them, unless he is willing to run the risk of writing nonsense. If the subject is a simple one, and the speaker's style is easy and natural, the effort to follow him mentally as well as verbally is not great; but when the subject is abstruse or technical, or in other respects difficult, or when the speaker's style is involved or obscure, or his delivery rapid, especially when these peculiarities, troublesome enough singly, come together, as now and then they do, the stenographer has no easy task before him in endeavouring to present an accurate and intelligible report of what is said. It is not merely that unusual words, strange alike to ear and hand, crowd up on him; that is the least part of the difficulty: the quick ear and the ready hand generally manage to get at least a fair approximation to the name of a new-comer, and a good dictionary will often (not always) do the rest. The serious part of the matter is to follow the train of thought, to understand the unfamiliar allusion, to see what your man is driving at; for if you fail in this, your

report, whether full or condensed, will probably be imperfect and foggy, if not absurd. In the effort to avoid such a catastrophe the mind no less than the fingers must be at work, and that actively. It may often be needful to consult, if there is time, books of reference for the purpose of clearing up ambiguities or supplying deficiencies. I dare not say how many encyclopædias, and histories, and gazetteers, and dictionaries (technical and otherwise), and concordances I have had occasion to explore in quest of information that I had not possessed to enable me to transcribe accurately some shorthand notes that from the speaker's fault or mine were hazy and unintelligible, or perhaps in search of the name of a person or a city that had entirely escaped my memory, if it even had a place there. No reporter, however well informed, can be independent of such aid, and in seeking it he is adding to his knowledge and cultivating his intellectual powers.—(*Ibid*)

## **Never begrudge any reasonable amount of time in looking up works of reference.**

Let me hear interject a parenthetical remark. It is to recommend in any of my young hearers who may find themselves in the difficult position I have described, and who may be tempted to shirk the labor of appealing to books of reference, never to begrudge any reasonable amount of time thus employed. It may seem tiresome to have to hunt up an unknown name or a technical expression when you can guess at the spelling, or give it the go-by altogether; but believe me, the satisfaction of securing your doubtful word, or phrase, or quotation, will amply repay your couple of hours' research. No doubt a great deal will depend upon the importance of the ambiguous words, how far they are necessary to keep up the continuity of the speech; if they can be sacrificed without making a serious break, and if time presses, it is better to omit them than to run the risk of revealing your imperfect information; but if they must be given, if their omission would necessitate the omission of much besides, spare no pains and no time to see that you are giving an accurate report



of the words. You may even discover that the speaker has tripped ; and if you can get him right by substituting one name for another, or rectifying a misquotation, you will have the satisfaction of doing your work well, if you do not secure the thanks of the speaker himself.—(*Ibid.*)

## Constant improvement in the Reporter's style of composition.

Again, it is hardly possible that a reporter can be constantly engaged in his work without improving his style of composition. He hears the best public speakers dealing with all kinds of subjects, and many of these afford admirable models of style. It is true that he also hears some of the worst, and has to deal with extremely slipshod, not to say ungrammatical, English ; but then it is, or ought to be, his aim to give such utterances a better dress, and sometimes (as in giving a very condensed report) to recast them altogether ; and therefore work of this character is mental, not merely mechanical. A reporter who writes bad English can have made but little use of the opportunities that his profession has afforded him, even if he has not been a diligent reader, or made composition a set study. I have not forgotten the taunts that have been directed by literary purists against "newspapers English," "penny-a-liners' slang," and the like. Nor will I assert that they are altogether unfounded. There are conventional words and phrases to be found in newspaper reports which one would willingly see discarded ; and some of the juvenile attempts at fine writing that one occasionally meets with in the newspapers press may not unreasonably provoke a smile. But I think that these peculiarities have been greatly exaggerated. Every profession has its *argot*, and all beginners are tempted to be flowery and grandiose. But, making all reasonable allowances, it may, I think, be safely affirmed that reporters, as a body, write a clear, intelligible, and accurate English style.—(*Ibid.*)

## **Mental process involved in following a speaker's train of thought.**

In speaking of shorthand as a mental exercise I ought not to omit a reference to the actual mental process involved in taking shorthand notes. It is certainly of a singular and complicated nature, and is deserving of more attention than has, I think, been paid to it. The mere verbal expression, to say nothing of sense, requires the closest attention. The writer is always a few words behind the speaker, and hence the necessity of his listening to one set of words while he is writing another. As soon as a word has caught his ear, the mind has to recall the appropriate sign for its expression and to despatch an electrical message to the nimble fingers to write it on paper. One after another, as the words are uttered, this process is repeated; the speaker is all the while some distance ahead, and the mind has to deal with two sets of words at the same time. This, of course, could not be done unless the mind and hand thoroughly understood each other, unless the requisite forms for the representation of the words were so well known and remembered that they instantly presented themselves for use. The least hesitation about an outline might throw the reporter back half-a-dozen words, and make him lose the thread of a sentence. As I have said, the mind and the hand must be in perfect accord in regard to the written characters. But this is not the only mental effort involved. If the reporter's work is to be properly done he must attend not only to the verbal expression but to the sense of the speaker. Unless shorthand characters are at his fingers' ends, this is almost a matter of impossibility. The mind can hardly attend to the meaning of what is being written while it is actively engaged in considering the forms of the words; but when these are called up instantly, as they are required, with but little conscious effort, it can pay as much attention to the speaker's train of thought as can the mind of any ordinary listener who is not engaged in writing.—(*Ibid.*)

## **Mental abstraction during report taking.**

The reporter constantly hears the observation made to him, "I

suppose you cannot attend to the sense while you are busily occupied in writing it in shorthand." I presume I need not say here that, that is a sheer delusion. Though the mind must be in some way at work in regard to the mechanical expression of the words, it is ordinarily, under the circumstances I have mentioned, quite free to devote its powers to taking in the sense (if there be any) of the speakers' utterances, or it may, strange as it may seem to the uninitiated, wander at its own sweet will away altogether from the speaker and his speech, without bestowing a thought on the words he is uttering or the characters required to represent them or the sense intended to be conveyed. Yes, you may, if you are an adept at the art, report a speech and be at the same time thinking of anything but the words you are recording—of your dinner, of your sweetheart, of your unpaid tailor's bill, of the holiday trip you are going to take, of the address you are expected to give at the next meeting of your society. I have often, when transcribing or dictating my notes, come across passages which I had not the slightest recollection of having written, and which I must have written while thinking of some totally different subject. I remember once taking a report in this way when a burst of laughter came from the meeting. I had not the remotest idea of what had been said to occasion it, and while the laughter was going on I took the opportunity of reading back a line or two in order to discover the joke, which I did in due course. I have often wondered how far the mind is really at liberty thus to dispose of itself during the actual work of note-taking, and have occasionally tried some experiments with a view to a solution of the question. Ordinarily the wandering of the thought away from the speaker and his speech is an involuntary thing and may be nothing more than the very similar phenomenon that one experiences in church when a prosaic sermon fails to secure one's divided attention. But I have often found that I have been able, by a distinct effort of will, while taking shorthand notes, to direct my thought in quite another channel, to refurnish my house, to plan a journey, to take a trip on my tricycle, or to pay or receive a visit, and the like, paying no attention whatever to what I was writing. But there seems to be a decided limit to this kind of mental abstrac-

tion. I tried the other day, for instance, to do a very small sum in arithmetic while writing shorthand from rather slow dictation, and I utterly failed to accomplish the task. I then tried to compose a couplet, but I came to grief most ignominiously. The moment my mind was fixed on a given number, "seven," "fifteen," or on a word or phrase in the couplet—"love," or "dove," or "fifteen," or on a word or phrase in the couplet—"love" or "drove," "smart" or "heart"—the fingers straightway stopped or staggered, and wanted to write the number or the word thought of instead of the words dictated. I imagine that when the mind voluntarily or involuntarily dwells on other subjects in the way I have described, while the hand is engaged in reporting, the thought is unconnected with verbal expression, and that therefore there is no separate set of words coming in the way of those which the hand is recording. Under these circumstances the thought is free to wander to any extent, as it may well do, without clothing itself in language. But when definite words are inseparable from the train of thought an antagonism is set up, the mind and hand are no longer accurately co-ordinated, and the fingers stay their onward course.

Before leaving this subject let me say that although it is quite possible, as I have shown, to report a speaker discoursing on one subject and at the same time to think of another, the habit is one which should always be discouraged. Unless the mind is at work upon what the speaker is saying, absurd verbal mistakes are easily made. Words of similar sound become confused, and the reporter finds, for example, that whereas the speaker has alluded to "a double lie in the shape of half a truth," he has actually written "a double eye in the shape of half a tooth."—(*Ibid.*)

## **Listening to a speaker and at the same time transcribing preceding notes.**

There is another instance of complicated mental operation in connection with reporting which has often surprised me—I refer to the act of listening to a speaker while transcribing the notes of

another part of his speech, or perhaps of the address of another speaker. This is not an uncommon experience. The reporter is, perhaps, taking a condensed report ; he has taken down some passage which he wants to give fully ; to save time he transcribes it at the meeting, and while he is engaged at his task his ears are sufficiently attentive to what is being said to enable him to note any remarkable utterance which he ought to preserve, and you may see him suddenly discontinue his transcript and jot down the few words which he wants to record, and then to resume his former task.

Now, whether in all these simultaneous actions there are different, and, so to say, independent regions of the mind at work at the same time, whether the different tasks performed are under the control of different cerebral convolutions, or whether the phenomena are to be explained on the theory of automatic or unconscious cerebration, is a question that I am not going to discuss ; I refer it to the physiologists, or psychologists, and shall feel greatly indebted to any of those gentlemen if they will solve the mystery for me.—(*Ibid.*)

## Reporters, though "writing by sound" must "write sense."

"I suppose you write by sound, and not by sense?" So said a learned counsel when examining a reporter, who, at a celebrated trial, was called to prove his notes. It was intended to be a damaging question, and to depreciate the value of the witness's evidence. In this respect nothing could have been more absurd. The same thing, however, has been repeated *ad nauseam* by persons who have desired to cast a slur upon the work of the shorthand writer ; and in the early days of Phonography shorthand writers themselves, who certainly ought to have known better, often indulged in the meaningless sneer, "It is writing by sound, you know, not by sense." In truth, it would be just as rational to say, "I suppose you talk by sound, and not by sense." Of course (the reply would be), I talk by sound ; whether I talk sense or not depends not upon my vocal organs, but upon the action of my brain, upon the ideas which I manage to con-

vey by the sound. Precisely the same answer must be given with regard to shorthand. True, I write by sound ; whether I write sense (to "write *by* sense" is hardly English) depends upon whether there is any sense to write. If the sounds convey sense, I write sense ; if they convey nonsense, I write nonsense.

But I suppose what is really meant to be conveyed by the oracular utterances to which I have alluded is, that the professional reporter requires something more than the ability to write the sounds that he hears. That may seem a very profound observation, and one hears it sometimes made with very impressive solemnity. But surely it needs no Solon to discover it. It is the merest truism, and no one but a simpleton would dispute it ; I had almost said that no one but a simpleton would think it worth while to enunciate it. The reporter (whatever system of shorthand he writes) has a good deal more to do than to take down sounds ; but that is his first task, and, unless he has an extraordinary memory, he can no more do his work without this preliminary than an artist can produce a picture without paint and brush and canvas. The words are his raw material, which requires more or less manipulation before attaining its ultimate shape ; and the reporter's success largely depends upon the skill which he manifests in the manipulative or formative process. It is his business to grasp the sense of the words which he writes. If they fitly express that sense his task is a light one—he has but to reproduce the words he has written. If they are clumsily put together, he has to put them in a more comely form, to fill up gaps, to remove excrescences, to round off angularities, and if necessary add a little polish. If there is no sense in the words he has to record, it is not his function to supply that commodity : he must then content himself with presenting the words as they are uttered, simply seeing that they are grammatical, or (if that discretion be permitted him) omit them altogether.—(*Ibid.*)

## **Ideas not intelligibly expressed by Speakers.**

There are two classes of persons who fail to supply the reporter

with sense in addition to sound. The first consist of speakers who have ideas, but fail to express them intelligibly ; the second have no ideas at all, and their words are *Vox et præterea nihil*. The first of these give the reporter the most concern. It is of very little consequence how the man of no ideas is represented ; but to misrepresent a thoughtful man, who has the misfortune to express himself awkwardly or obscurely, is a more serious matter. The conscientious reporter will do his best, in the case of such a speaker, to seize the thought that he has vainly endeavored to express, and enshrine it in more suitable words ; but, however painstaking he may be, he runs the risk of failure, and may even be betrayed into attributing to the speaker sentiments which he would utterly disavow. Such a result is mortifying, but it is the speaker and not the reporter who is at fault. It is said that a Member of Parliament once rose in the House of Commons to make a speech, and in his first few sentences expressed himself so badly as to say the very opposite of what he intended ; and when the members laughed he made matters worse by adding, " Mr. Speaker, when I say that, I mean this !" That is exactly the case with many orators : when they say that, they mean this ; and it is too bad to blame the unfortunate reporter if he has failed to discern the precise parts of the speech where meaning and expression have been divorced. There is a species of *aphasia* with which certain nervous persons are affected, the chief peculiarity of which is that the patient constantly mistakes one word for another, and one class of words for another class. If asked how old he is, he will perhaps reply, " Sixpence halfpenny ;" and if interrogated as to where he was born, he may say in all simplicity, " Nebuchadnezzar." This affection is attributed, I believe, to a defect in certain of the convolutions of the brain : and I have sometimes thought that some such cerebral mischiefs might explain the singular misuse of words on the part of speakers whom now and then it is one's misfortune to report. Whatever the explanation, it is certain that sense and sound are not duly co-ordinated, and what Madam Malaprop calls " a sad derangement of epitaphs" is the result, bewildering the auditors, and driving the reporter to the verge of despair. How many of the complaints of

inaccuracy that one reads in the newspapers from irate orators are due to the cause I do not pretend to say, but there can be very little doubt that it is the origin of not a few of them. Like most other reporters, I have often pored over sentences (which I have been certain I have written correctly) until my head ached in the vain endeavor to extract the speaker's meaning; and have ended by omitting the passage entirely, or letting it pass in the hope, not perhaps a very sanguine one, that others might solve a mystery which had been impenetrable to myself. The speaker may or may not have had a clear perception of his meaning; at any rate, he has failed to convey it in language adapted to ordinary intelligence. Of course I am not now speaking of very technical matters, which will naturally appear more or less obscure to those who are not themselves experts, but of the ordinary range of subjects which involve no special difficulty of comprehension. Nor am I alluding to defective and badly-constructed sentences which, however faulty in composition, serve to convey clearly enough the speaker's meaning; an experienced reporter knows well enough how to deal with these; I refer to cases of verbal entanglement in which sound and sense have been completely severed, and language has been employed in what is supposed to be its diplomatic use, to conceal rather than to reveal thought. Such cases might often baffle the wisdom of Solomon; they certainly transcend the powers and disturb the dreams of the nineteenth century reporter.—(*Ibid.*)

### Speakers who have no ideas to express.

As to the second class of persons whom I mentioned—those who have no ideas to express—I need say but little. It may seem strange that persons so ill-endowed should ever venture to rise and address a meeting, but the phenomenon is not a very rare one. Every reporter can recall cases in which he has had to read through whole pages of shorthand notes, a wilderness of mere words, in search of some thought or fact that could be embodied in the report he was preparing; but sound and sense have been in inverse proportion, and after all his endeavors to obtain a solid residuum out of such



abundant material, his work has painfully reminded him of the recipe for Irish workhouse soup—a quart of water boiled down to a pint! Some popular speakers even occasionally deliver themselves of addresses of the character. Called upon, perhaps, at short notice, and having little or nothing to say, they utter a few sentences *ore rotundo* and with such an amplitude of verbiage that the audience is as much impressed as the old lady who derived spiritual comfort from her minister's solemn pronounciation of "Mesopotamia." But once in the reporter's crucible the words speedily evaporate, leaving no more substantial precipitate than the Hibernian article of diet aforesaid.—(*Ibid.*)

## **"By thy words thou shalt be justified or condemned."**

If then the reporter in the witness-box or elsewhere be henceforth twitted with writing sound and not sense, my recommendation is that he should simply reply, "That depends," and shift the responsibility from his own shoulder to that of the speaker. I know it is sometimes alleged that a reporter's business is to convert nonsense into sense, to correct misstatements, and generally sit in judgment on what a speaker is saying. For myself I wholly disclaim any such duty. With a speaker's arguments and statements of fact (slips of the tongue apart) I have absolutely no concern except as a recorder. If he is faulty in his logic, weak in his history, and altogether at sea in his geography, that is his concern, not mine. If I am condensing I use my discretion as to what I omit and what I retain; but when reporting fully, it is not my business, as indeed it is not within my power, to see that every conclusion is logically deducible from the premise, or that every fact stated has an historical or scientific basis. My function is to endeavor to understand what the speaker means, and to give it expression as nearly as may be in his own language; so that he may not escape the application of the Scriptural law, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."—(*Ibid.*)

## **A popular fallacy that "shorthand writers" and "reporters" are synonymous terms.**

That having attained to proficiency in shorthand writing, the portals of an honorable, if not particularly lucrative profession are thrown open, and nothing remains but to enter in and take full possession. No young man can make a greater mistake than to suppose that because he has mastered the principles of phonography, he is of necessity endowed with all the essential qualifications of a first class reporter. It is time this false notion were exploded, so that the evil in question may in some degree be remedied. Lads yet at school; young men in their teens, men of maturer years even if not of much ripper judgment; and fond parents entertaining ambitious designs in reference to their peculiarly gifted sons—all these must have their minds disabused of the idea that by investing some few shillings in shorthand books and giving for a few months an occasional spare hour to their study one is thereby being fully qualified to take rank in the Fourth Estate of the realm. There is no such royal road to journalism; and it is because of the influx of large numbers who have acted upon the idea, that the efficiency and character of the profession are in danger of being lowered and its avenues blocked up by crowds of incompetent pretenders.—(*Chambers Journal*, 1881.)

## **Like a poet, a reporter is "born" not "made."**

The saying that "poets are born not made," applies with equal force and truth to journalists. There are certain qualifications which it is absolutely necessary a reporter should possess, the nature of which would never be dreamed of by the inexperienced, and for which a mere proficiency in shorthand can never act as a substitute. It would be just as reasonable for a lad who had merely mastered the rudiments of geometrical drawing to consider himself competent to the whole day work of an experienced Civil Engineer as for any one to imagine that because he can "take down" a sermon at the rate of ninety words a minute and transcribe the same at the rate of a column in four hours, he is entitled to rank alongside men such as

**Thomas Allen Reed or Archibald Forbes.** A note-taker such a one may in time become ; but a note-taker and a reporter are two very different personages. A man may even be able to take every word of a low and eloquent speech, and furnish a transcript which for accuracy could not be surpassed ; and yet be far removed from being a qualified journalist. There is as much difference between a mere shorthand writer and a capable reporter, as there is between a photographer and a portrait painter. Indeed this power to take down a speech verbatim—although every reporter should possess this power—is in actual work, perhaps, of all his accomplishments, the least often called into requisition. It is seldom indeed that a reporter finds himself called upon to follow a speaker from beginning to end, and to reproduce that speech word for word, relying upon *mechanical skill* rather than *mental ability*. In the prosecution of his work, this mechanical skill is simply the reporter's collecting agent, which he employs in getting together *the raw material out of which to evolve form and symmetry*. When a man listens to two hours rapid speaking with the consciousness that six columns of talk have to be reproduced in one column of print, it is then he realises the fact that mere mechanical skill forms but a very small, even to an essential portion, of a reporter's stock in trade. It is under such circumstances as this that scores of young men find to their cost, as well as to their chagrin what a grand mistake they have made in supposing themselves duly qualified reporters on the strength of a fair proficiency in shorthand writing.—(*Ibid.*)

## **A reporter must be endowed with the intuitive faculty of seizing upon the essential features of a speech.**

It must be borne in mind that there are certain faculties a reporter must necessarily possess, which, if not natural, can rarely if ever, be acquired. They may be developed and improved, if present in some degree, but they can scarcely be imparted where the germ itself is altogether wanting. He must possess the faculty of intui-

tively seizing upon the essential features of any occurrence which he may be interested to report, whether it be a single speech, an entire meeting, or some important public affair extending over days or even weeks. It would never do for a reporter, either whilst an affair was in progress, or upon its termination, to be anxiously cogitating within himself as to what he should retain and what he should reject all this must be settled by the faculty of which we are speaking, and which must attract, as to a focus, the really important points—grouping them in their proper order and within the necessary limits, without loss of time or any special effort being involved in the process. He must also have an intuitive perception of the relative value of words with all their shades of meaning, so that he may be able to employ just that particular word which shall convey to the reader the exact sense and meaning of the original. And with this latter faculty must be combined the gift of facile expression and natural and correct arrangement; for woe unto him if he be under the necessity of writing and re-writing before he can get his composition into something like proper form.—(*Ibid.*)

## **A reporter requires a well-balanced mind, a cool head and an impartial judgment.**

We do not say a reporter should have no fixed principles, no private opinions of his own, but he must be careful not to allow his opinions to influence his reports. In his degree, he should aspire to something like the impartiality of the judge, who, whilst on the bench, knows nothing of friend or foe, but decides simply upon the merits, and altogether apart from personal considerations.

In times of political excitement and contest the caution, prudence and judgment of the reporter are frequently put to the severest tests, and it will be well for him in such times if he bear in mind the old maxim to have long ears and a short tongue.—(*Ibid.*)

## **A reporter should be posted up to date with reference to current literature.**

The reporter so far as his position and duties call for it, should keep himself abreast of the times. He must be acquainted not only with the history of the past, but also with the occurrences of the present. In order to accomplish this, it is obvious that he must be conversant with current literature in its various forms. He must know generally what is appearing in the leading daily papers; the weekly religious, social and miscellaneous publications, the monthly magazines, and the quarterly reviews. But if, in order to do this he finds it necessary to sit himself compilers in his arm-chair take them up, and read every sentence in them, then he may as well give up the task at once; for frequently it will be impossible to do more than take a hasty glance at a paper or magazine whilst journeying to some appointment or between the cases in a Police or County Court. Consequently he must possess the power of assimilation, and be able, if he expects to rise in his profession to make himself acquainted in a comparatively short time with the merits of any subject he may be called to write upon. Of course, this means, in many cases, a good deal of superficiality; but all journalists must, from the exigencies of their situation, be more or less superficial. —(*T. A. Reed.*)

## **A reporter should keep within 3 or 4 words of the speaker.**

In taking notes of a speech the reporter is generally a few words behind the speaker. He may at times be ten or a dozen words in arrear, but he should endeavour to keep within three or four words if possible. In the latter case a sudden increase in speed will not disconcert him; but it may be fatal if he is already a long way behind. It is quite possible to be too close to the speaker. Singular mistakes may arise from the proximity. Thus, I have myself written the figures "40" as the beginning of the word "fortitude." They were, of course, written before the final syllable "tude" had been

uttered, or had time to reach the brain. In the same way, when close upon the speaker's heels, I have written the grammalogue for "very," and have had to cross it out on discovering that the word was "verified," which required an entirely different commencement. In such cases the writing and the utterance must have been practically simultaneous.—(*Ibid.*)

**A reporter must have brain power to take  
in the sense of the speaker at the same  
time that he keeps pace with him.**

I have recommended the student to follow carefully, as far as possible, the *sense* of what he is writing. I know it has often been suggested that the reporter who is busy with his pen in recording a speech, and is perhaps straining every nerve to keep pace with the speaker, has no brain power left to take in the sense of the words, for seeing the point of an argument, or apprehending the general structure of a discourse. There is very little truth in this suggestion; in many respects it is the very opposite of true. I do not deny that an unskilled Shorthand writer, who has not the forms at his fingers' ends, ready to be traced without the slightest hesitation, who has consciously to *think* of the outlines he is drawing, may find it difficult, if not impossible, to follow his speaker in a double sense, in thought as well as in word. Nor will I go so far as to say that even an accomplished reporter, whose Shorthand forms are his obedient and agile slaves, may not now and then find himself in the same position. When hard pressed by a fluent speaker, discoursing, say, on a technical or unfamiliar subject, it is quite conceivable that even he, with all his skill and experience, may be so much occupied with the effect to secure an accurate record of the words as to be unable to follow with anything like ease or comfort the train of thought or the narration of facts with which he has to deal. But under ordinary circumstances an efficient stenographer finds that his practice of note-taking not only is no obstacle to his mental apprehension of the spoken words, but in some cases absolutely assists him to grasp their

meaning. He is compelled to listen with great care, to concentrate his attention upon the words and sentences as they fall from the speaker's lips, and not allow himself to be diverted from his task ; his ear is a cultivated one through his habit of note-taking, and, in spite of the disadvantage of not being able to look at the speaker he catches many words that would escape a casual listener ; and if he knows that he has to give, not perhaps a verbatim, but a condensed account of what is said, he has the strongest reason for endeavouring to seize the points as they arise. The practice of note-taking, therefore, is a help, and not a hindrance. Of course, I know that it is possible for the Shorthand writer, especially when he has an easy speaker to follow, to pursue his work in a mechanical sort of way without having the remotest idea of the words he is writing. He may be even pursuing a totally independent train of thought, planning his holiday tour, wondering how the tailor's bill is to be paid, recalling the incidents of last night's pantomime, and knowing no more of what he is recording than his pen or his note-book. But this is not a habit to be encouraged. The trained and conscientious reporter, as a rule, follows the sense as well as the sound ; if not, he pays the penalty of falling into many a pitfall. Ludicrous mishearings are often the result of inattention to the sense of spoken words ; and, unless the mistake is detected in transcribing—an operation that is also sometimes conducted without due deliberation—it may get into print, very much to the confusion of the reporter and the annoyance of the speaker.—(*Ibid.*)

### **Individuality of speech in temperament and diction, actuality and color should be preserved.**

When revising and condensing the speeches of public men the conscientious reporter retains, as far as possible, the exact phraseology that has been used. If this course were not generally followed by the reporters, the individuality of speeches in temperament and diction, their actuality and colour, would be lost. All would be

alike so far as the outward dress of language is concerned ; all would be reduced or raised to the same monotonous level. Some people may still retain the notion which had some vogue in the early days of reporting, that reporter's colour their reports of speeches, according to their own political opinions. But the idea if it does exist, is utterly without foundation. A reporter is no more influenced in his work by his political opinions than is a doctor or a lawyer.—(MICHAEL MACDONAGH in the *Nineteenth Century* March 1895.)

## **In condensation of a speech, the facts and arguments should be scrupulously adhered to.**

If a meeting has to be condensed to one-half or two-thirds of the length of a verbatim report, a judicious reporter should be able to give his readers all the facts and arguments adduced very much in the words of the speakers themselves, omitting only the repetitions and the unnecessary verbiage which characterize the great majority of spoken addresses. A public speaker is naturally more diffuse than he would be if communicating his thoughts in writing. A reader can look back at a paragraph the sense of which he has missed, but a listener has no such resource, and he therefore expects that the speaker addressing him should be full and explicit in his declarations. The reporter, in his work of condensation, may often be helped, both in matter and style, by thinking what the speaker would have written had he been using his pen instead of his tongue. In regard to length, it may be safely asserted that, as a general rule, a speech may be condensed to three-fourths or two-thirds of its entire length without missing a single idea contained in it. Some speeches, it is true, are so terse and pointed in style as to be incapable of this kind of treatment, but these are very exceptional.

Where the condensation is of a severer kind, involving the rejection, not simply of superfluous verbiage, but of the less material parts of a speech, and the retention of its salient features, a still greater demand is made upon the judgment and discretion of the re-



porter. Some excellent Shorthand writers, no doubt from the want of experience in this particular branch of reporting work, find it difficult and perplexing. Accustomed to transcribe punctiliously every syllable they have taken down, they cannot endure the thought of extensive omissions such as are often needed in newspaper reporting. There is a time-honored story, *ben trovato* if not *vero*, of a *Times* reporter, on being desired by the editor to cut down a speech to one-half its length, innocently inquired which half he should write. I have hardly ever met with so perfect a specimen of the stenographer pure and simple; but I have known many a young reporter who, in trying to condense a long speech, has laboriously begun at the beginning, dropping a few words here and there, afraid to skip entire sentences, and retaining a large portion of what, after all, has been mere introductory matter leading up to the substantial part of the address; so that when this has been reached he has discovered, to his dismay, that he has used up all the space allotted to him, and, unless he begins *de novo*, he has to dismiss the really important part of the speech in a few lines. The substance of a speech is often summed up at the end in a few words by the speaker himself; and if the reporter has been wise enough to take them down he cannot, as a rule, do better than adopt them for his own abridgment.—(*Ibid.*)

## How much a reporter should take down of a speech of which only a condensed report will be required.

For a perfect and ideal condensation a reporter should perhaps have before him a verbatim report of the speaker's words. But this involves a great deal of labor alike in the original note-taking and in going through a mass of almost useless material to pick out the parts that alone are needed for the condensed report. The reporter is often able, in listening to a speech, to jot down its chief characteristics and all its telling points, without the necessity of taking a full note. In this case, when he

comes to transcribe, the greater part of the mental work of selection has been already accomplished, and all that remains to be done is to give it verbal shape. The labor of wading through a dozen or twenty pages of notes in search of "points" is thus saved. But that is not the only view of the question. It is not *always* possible to decide during the delivery of a speech what the really important points may prove to be. A seemingly insignificant remark, which the reporter has not thought it necessary to note, may turn out to have a very important bearing on the general argument or statement; and it is not until the speaker has concluded that the different parts of his address reveal their true relations and proportions. From this point of view a careful reporter will often prefer to take a very full, I do not mean verbatim, report of a speech of which he knows that only a brief summary will be required. This will be especially the case when the speech is one of unusual importance, such as that of a leading statesman dealing with an interesting political question. There is, no doubt, a great deal of common-place reporting that hardly calls for this extra exertion on the part of the reporter; and, indeed, the pressure under which reporting is commonly done almost forbids the expenditure of time which such a method involves. But in no case should the reporter content himself with taking down just so much of a speech as he expects to require for his condensed report. Without troubling himself to take a verbatim note, he should take enough to preserve the general drift of the speech, if only that he may be able the better to *describe* its purport, though he may not need even to summarize it in the ordinary way. It is much better that he should throw away a certain amount of labor in useless note-taking than run the risk of missing something which, at first appearing immaterial, acquires importance from a later part of the speech, or from some comment of a subsequent speaker. Much naturally will depend on the degree of condensation required and the time at the disposal of the reporter.—(*Ibid.*)

## **Slavish adherence to the speaker's words is out of the question.**

Condensation is not the only art which the reporter has to cultivate in reporting speeches. Even when taking a full, or so-called verbatim speech he soon discovers that a slavish adherence to the speaker's words is out of the question. Different views are taken by different reporters as to how far they are justified in departing from the precise phraseology employed by a speaker. There are, unquestionably, some speakers whom no reporter in his senses would dream of reporting literally. The style is so incoherent, the grammar so loose, and the general construction so involved, that nothing less than a verbal transformation is needed before the words are presented to the public in a printed form. Long sentences have to be broken up, and short ones amalgamated, redundancies lopped off, hiatuses supplied, and a confused, jerky, obscure speech made to read smoothly, easily and intelligibly. Nor is this always an easy task, even to the practised hand. If such a speech happens to deal with statistics, or with any subject of a complicated character or requiring great precision of expression, the labor involved in preparing it for the press is very great, and, when the greatest care has been exercised, the result is often unsatisfactory. It is useless to say that such persons should not be allowed to speak in public, or that if they do, they should not be reported. It is enough to know that they do speak, and that sometimes they must be reported. These efforts are among the painful duties of the reporter, and must be accepted together with the easier and more agreeable parts of his professional occupation.—(*Ibid.*)

## **Hopelessly involved speakers.**

Some speakers are so hopelessly involved, rarely completing a single sentence, that the task of the reporter in dealing with their speeches is by no means an easy one, and, as I have said, nothing short of a complete reconstruction will suffice to render them intelligible. A speaker of this class will begin a sentence two or three times before making a start, then suddenly draw up and make a

plunge in another direction, then double back for a moment, then dive into the thickets of a never-ending parenthesis, then wander about in a maze, and finally land in a region of impenetrable obscurity. Half an hour's "turn" at oratory of this description in its most aggravated form is simply maddening. I have sometimes heard a speaker begin after this fashion :—

"This resolution which has been moved by my friend on my right—I wish he was always on my right, for he is a kind of man—you know what I mean—I am always glad, and so is everybody that knows him as well as I do—we went to school together I don't know how many years ago, and I don't want to remember—I was about to say that the principles which we are met this evening are principles that no one, not even the lady who has just spoken—and we are delighted to see ladies on the platform ; how we should get on without them I am sure—well, I suppose they could not get on without us either, for you know Milton says, or if it is not Milton, I am not quite sure, but as we advance in life our memory doesn't improve ; at least that is my experience—"

and so on. Fortunately such meaningless talk can generally be omitted ; but when a reporter has to supply, perhaps for official purposes, a verbatim report, or what is understood to be such, and has to deal with material of this description, he is tempted to bewail his fate. There are no consecutive ideas ; there is nothing that is of capable of condensation ; and if he gives any report at all—a verbatim one is out of the question—he must draw upon his own resources, and make the best guess he can as to what the speaker might, could, would, or should have said.—(*Ibid*)

## **Precision and deliberation in a speaker ensure a faithful record of speech.**

Other speakers, however, speak with so much precision and deliberation that the reporter has nothing to do but faithfully to record and literally transcribe the words, as an amanuensis would do in the case of ordinary dictation. But this is a rare experience. If it were a common one, the reporter's occupation would be one of the easiest, requiring little more than mechanical skill. Perhaps it is

fortunate that it is not so. Difficult speeches, whether in point of speed or of verbal construction, demand the services of highly skilled reporters, and this naturally affects the important question of remuneration. Between the two extremes that I have mentioned, there are many gradations to be dealt with according to the necessities of the case, or according to the discretion of the reporter. I have said that a reporter may sometimes be guided in his transcript by his view of what a speaker would have written instead of spoken. This is especially the case when he is summarising or considerably abbreviating. If he is presenting a full report, I do not think that he should always or often adopt this standard. If the speech reads fairly well as delivered, there is no necessity to embellish or reconstruct it—a process which might destroy its character as a *speech*. The reporter is not called upon to convert a speech into an essay. He should, of course, correct any obvious slip or grammatical blunder, and make the words read with reasonable smoothness and accuracy, not omitting to preserve any individual characteristics of the speaker which they may exhibit.—(*Ibid.*)

### **A reporter is not a party politician.**

If the reporter is a strong politician, he may wince under the necessity of giving prominence to one of the enemy's camp, and keeping his own favorites in the back-ground. But the born reporter is not a party politician; and it is to him a matter of supreme indifference (unless he is paid by quantity) whether he expands a speech to three or four columns or condenses it into as many lines. Conservative and Liberal, Gladstonian and Unionist, are but verbal expressions; apart from his "copy" they are meaningless. As he writes, he is each and all in turns. He abandons his own identity, and merges it into that of the speaker. He is for the time possessed, if not "obsessed," and gives forth as he receives. Nor does he at all suffer from these rapid transitions; they become natural to him. When he is at work it is as much his duty to sink his own individuality as it is in the case of the barrister when he is representing his clients. I know that this doctrine is sometimes pushed to an unwarrantable

extreme, and made to justify a political writer in writing in direct violation of his own convictions. The cases are not paralled. The reporter does not make himself responsible for what he writes ; he is professedly but a mouth-piece, a narrator. The other assumes the function of a teacher and a guide.—(*Ibid.*)

## **One reason as to how public speakers happen to be misrepresented.**

The context is the most powerful aid to deciphering similar words, but in technical reporting it is impossible to obtain the aid of the context unless one is familiar with the subject of discourse. Without this knowledge, an expert acquaintance with the phonographic art would be insufficient ; for, however rapidly you may write, technical reporting will be far beyond your reach unless the subject is one with which you are acquainted. It is really remarkable the number of scientific terms having widely different meanings which seem to go in pairs as regards phonographic outlines ; and it is often absolutely impossible for the uninitiated, who require to go to the dictionary when in doubt, to tell which word may have been used by the speaker.

It is impossible to emphasize too strongly the great importance of reproducing the words of public men without misrepresentation. Public speakers often complain that their utterances are misrepresented in the press, and although such misrepresentation arises from a variety of circumstances, they are more often than from any other cause, the result of the reporter's ignorance of the means by which similar words, and similar outlines may be distinguished from each other.—(*Oliver McEvan.*)

## **A reporter making himself the instrument of personal or political animosity.**

If a reporter is expected to report in such a way as to give a false impression of a speech, to omit some vital point which is essential to the apprehension of the rest, or by some artful gloss to ex-

pose the speaker to ridicule or condemnation, no shelter or plea should avail him. However briefly he may be required to report, he should insist upon reporting accurately. Happily, there are very few cases in which he is expected to do otherwise. It is to the interest of a newspaper proprietor to give his readers accurate reports, and he looks to his reporters to supply that commodity. But I have known instances in which requests have been made of the nature I have indicated. No honourable reporter, however, should allow himself to be the instrument of personal or political animosity. If he has a duty to his employer, he has also, as we shall see, a duty to the speaker, and he has no right to be a party to anything in the nature of misrepresentation.—(*T. A. Reed.*)

### **A speaker has a right to see that he is not misrepresented by the reporter.**

The relationship of reporters to speakers is one of a peculiar character. It is not the relation of employer and employed, and yet there is a distinct obligation on the part of the reporter to act fairly towards the persons whose speeches he reports. Not that he is obliged to report them fully, but that what he does report shall represent, as far as space will permit, the meaning intended to be conveyed. No speaker has a right to complain that he is briefly reported. He has no claim to the space allotted to him in the newspaper. His speeches are reported, not to oblige him, but for the information of the public. He has, however, the right to require that he shall not be misrepresented, and that, at any rate, the general purport of what he says shall be fairly presented to the reader. Some speakers have declared that they would rather not be reported at all, than have their speeches passed through the condensing apparatus of the reporter's brain and pen. That may be their individual feeling, but they can hardly expect to have effect given to it.—(*Ibid.*)

### **A humiliating practice.**

The members of the Fourth Estate lose nothing by the assertion

of their individual consequence, and it is to be lamented that too many of the reporting staff descend to a great deal of the humiliation of the side-table and iced gooseberry as the price of a little flattery or an elaborate notice of some trumpery affair.—(*J. H. Stouqueler.*)

## Hush-money to reporters.

I suppose there are few newspaper reporters of long experience who have not at times been tempted by pecuniary considerations to depart from the strict line of duty towards the journals which they represent. One of the commonest forms of bribery of this class is that of “keeping things out of the paper.” A man appears before a police court, and is extremely solicitous that his name should not be paraded in the daily broad sheet. A guinea offered to the reporter may secure his object, and if the reporter is not scrupulous, the public hears nothing of the matter. Those who have accepted this kind of “hush-money” have sometimes sought to justify it by saying that no one is injured. It is a poor excuse for neglect of duty. Possibly the case was of no great public importance, and no injury was done to the paper by not reporting it. If so, well and good. But no high-minded reporter will consent to receive a bribe for such an omission. If he withholds the report, it should be on wholly different considerations, and he should not run the risk of having his judgment warped by a pecuniary recompense.

Another form of bribery is that of inducing a reporter to aid a business concern, an exhibition, or a movement of any kind, by “writing it up.” It is so easy to write a laudatory paragraph; and, after all, everyone knows what value to attach to newspaper effusions of that kind. That is the excuse sometimes offered for indiscriminate or undeserved eulogy, and for the acceptance of an honorarium for penning it. But, surely, it is not consistent with a high sense of honour and responsibility; and if the Press is to maintain a high tone and merit the confidence of the public, its contributors must be above yielding to temptations of this description.—(*Ibid.*)



## Temptations in Law Courts reporting.

A bankrupt, who came from some place in Wales, was under examination on several occasions, and these examinations, which disclosed some transactions of a dishonorable character, were duly reported. The reports were transferred to the columns of the paper published in the town in which the bankrupt resided, and the result was that he was dismissed from the office of deacon, which he held in one of the dissenting chapels. On his application for a certificate, the Commissioner delivered an elaborate judgment, in which he reviewed the conduct of the bankrupt as a trader, and finally refused to grant any certificate whatever.

While I was transcribing my notes of the judgment, the bankrupt's wife came to me and asked if I was the gentleman that put Thomas's affairs in the papers.

I told her that I had reported his case hitherto.

"And will you put in what has taken place to-day?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied, "I am now writing it out."

"Oh, indeed to goodness," she exclaimed "my poor Thomas has been very much purged already by what has been printed about him. They have turned him out from being deacon, and what they will do now, indeed to goodness I don't know."

I expressed such sympathy for her as I could, but resumed my transcript.

"But must all this be published?" she asked again.

I replied affirmatively.

"I am sure you must be very tired," she said coaxingly, "writing so much; you must want something. If you wouldn't mind leaving out my poor Thomas's case, I wouldn't mind giving you that." And with that she laid down the princely sum of eighteenpence!

"I laughed outright at "poor Thomas's" wife; but I do her the

justice to say that she did not make any further offer. Sorrowfully taking up the eighteenpence, she went away saying, "Oh my poor Thomas, you have been purged enough before, but now you will be purged worse than all."—(*Mr. E. Austin, in "Stray Leaves from the Note-Book of a Provincial Reporter."*)

## High Standard of Reportorial competency.

All the reporters for the daily journals above the rank of juniors must be able to undertake any task which may be assigned them, no matter on how short a notice. It is above all things essential that they be accomplished note-takers, rapid and accurate transcribers, good paragraphists and able to manufacture a column or more of descriptive matter out of very scanty materials. We have used the term accomplished note-takers which, of course, implies a competent acquaintance with shorthand. This qualification is not everything, and the time was when reporters managed to get along tolerably well without it but such is out of the question now. Not only must the reporter be able to take a verbatim note when such is required, but he ought to possess sufficient literary and other knowledge to prevent him from making egregious blunders in the transcription of his notes. Of course this high standard of reportorial competency does not apply in the case of juniors, but the latter must at least show that they have in them the making of good journalists.—(*Alexander Paterson.*)

## The genuine and the counterfeit reporter.

We by no means affirm that there is no room for further improvement. The very opposite is the fact. There are the hangers-on of the press who constitute a vast and most heterogeneous "mixed multitude." They are to be met with in every town and district and though they call themselves "reporters" they have no right to such designation. Not a few of them earn a precarious livelihood as liners, and others in less reputable ways, and it is men of this kind who bring discredit upon the profession; the general public

not always taking the trouble to discriminate between the genuine and the counterfeit.—(*Ibid.*)

## **Journalistic gem of the first water.**

The thoroughly competent "all round" reporter, who is at the same time steady and trustworthy is a journalistic gem of the first water. His worth to the newspaper proprietor who has the good fortune to secure his services is "far above rubies." It is only those who have had experience of reporters of an opposite stamp that are able to assess him at his proper value. Of course it is understood that combined with competence, steadiness and reliability, there is the mind to work. The journalist who possesses these qualifications takes a pleasure in his work and studies to make the interests of the paper with which he is connected his own. He begrudges neither time nor labor in order that he may discharge his duties with credit to himself and to the satisfaction of his employers and the public.

Reporters of the above class are by no means so plentiful as some might be apt to imagine.—(*Alexander Paterson.*)

## **The extent of a reporter's technical knowledge.**

To be able to undertake with confidence every variety of work that is likely to fall to his lot, the shorthand writer needs to be an epitome of all the arts and sciences. One day he may be taking notes in the Law Courts in an action between two merchants, and the evidence may teem with expressions familiar to commercial people but "jargon" to most others. Next day he may be required to report one of a course of medical lectures. A day or two afterwards he may find himself in the afternoon at the annual meeting of a public company; and in the evening taking down a lecture on some branch of botanical research. His next engagement may be at a political meeting on Saturday evening; and on Sunday he may find himself seizing the words of a preacher, cramfull of out-of-the-way learning. His responsibility is great; and if he is to discharge his duties with

satisfaction to himself and to his clients, he will often have to spend in study and practice the hours that he would prefer to devote to relaxation and pleasure. The question has sometimes been raised as to whether anyone man ought to undertake work of such great variety. There are shorthand writers who would take in hand with perfect confidence the most difficult work in the Law Courts, but who would hesitate before accepting an engagement to report the proceedings of the Iron and Steel Institute, or a course of clinical lectures. They know that unfamiliar words—expressions meaningless to them—would probably be cropping up, sometimes in profusion, in every sentence. They know that to follow any speaker well and with certainty, one needs to be able to follow his argument intelligently, which implies some previous acquaintance with the subject. They see that there are pitfalls ahead, and they are so anxious not to stumble, that they avoid the path altogether. One of the speakers at the International Shorthand Congress in 1887 put this view very strongly. "If a man," he said, "is taking notes of a technical discussion, or anything that really requires him to think about what he is writing, it is impossible for him to take a correct note unless he understands it, at least partially." As an old shorthand writer of considerable reputation, he declared that he would refuse to attend any proceedings which he thought he could not understand. "I would not attempt, for instance," he added, "to deal with the technicalities I should meet with in the Admiralty Court, during the examination of witnesses of every description of nationality, speaking of the names of different ropes, rigging, and parts of a ship, which I had never heard of before, and which therefore I should be unable to recognize in the technical slang peculiar to the common sailor, who dealing with them as household words would rattle them out with the speed with which colloquial matter is always delivered." This contribution to the ethics of shorthand writing was not allowed to remain unchallenged; for immediately afterwards, another professional shorthand writer of not less experience rose and protested against its going forth from Congress that shorthand writers would not go into any Court and take any case. The point is one upon which it is not desirable to lay down any

absolute rule. One can imagine the shorthand writing profession so carefully organized that there should be experts always available, each one of them trained to the highest pitch of efficiency in one special kind of work, so that one would undertake nothing but political meetings, another would confine himself to biological, anatomical and medical addresses and discussions, a third would attend solely to the geological and perhaps also the mathematical and astronomical "department," while a fourth would limit himself to sermons and popular lectures, and a fifth would never attempt anything outside the Chancery Division and so on. The future, which, if we are to believe certain enthusiasts for social reform, will organize thoroughly every branch of industry, may possibly see something of the kind ; but at present it is impracticable. There is no reason why the shorthand writer should refuse any sort of work that he is prepared to fit himself to accomplish successfully. He must always be ready to give up time to preparing himself specially for special kinds of work ; unless he will do that, he had better decline the work. He need not endeavour to master every subject. He wants the ability to follow his speakers intelligently. By the very nature of the case he must content himself with a superficial knowledge of many subjects. The technical terms that he is likely to encounter he must be prepared for. He should concentrate himself upon these, ascertain what they are, and what they mean. Young phonographers sometimes imagine that they can dispense with this kind of preparation : experience will teach them the contrary. Older and more practised hands know the value of good cyclopædias and books of reference. They will consult special treatises whenever necessary. They know that the shorthand writer's education is never completed. He has to be always learning, always making himself more efficient. The ethical question raised at the Congress may be answered by the two propositions, that no shorthand writer ought to undertake any work that he is not competent to perform, and that every shorthand writer ought to take pains to prepare himself to accomplish successfully every kind of work that he accepts.—(*Phonetic Journal*.)

## **Public speakers and members of the Bench and the Bar very often mumble and expect to be accurately reported.**

Who are better able to criticize public speakers than those upon whom devolves the task of reporting their utterances? A man's valet, as a well-known proverb reminds us, knows more of his master's faults than the outside public, and is aware of faults the very existence of which that public does not suspect. And the reporter knows just what are the faults of the speaker better than most others of his hearers. The ordinary listener may miss a few words, may mis-hear others, may not understand the meaning intended to be conveyed by certain clumsily-constructed sentences in the speech he listens to, but he carries away with him a general idea of the course of the arguments, and he is satisfied. He pays comparatively little attention to the faults, the omissions, the shortcomings. With the reporter it is otherwise. He is, by the very nature of his work, made painfully aware of the shortcomings, and could tell the speaker precisely where he is lacking. Sometimes, indeed, there may be, on the part of the reporter, especially when he is young and inexperienced, a disposition to regard the speaker as if he were made for the reporters, and owed special duties towards them. He is inclined to think that the orator's sentences ought to be composed of familiar phonographic phrases, that his speed should be steady, that he should never quote poetry, and that he should always pause when the reporters have got a little in arrears with his words.

But the lesson is soon learned that orators will not accommodate the reporters. Of a well-known dean it has been said that it appears as though, before preparing his sermons, he goes through all the text-books of shorthand and avoids every word and every phrase for which there is a convenient outline. This means that the dignitary in question strives after originality of expression, seeks to frame his sentences so that they shall make an impression by reason of the novelty of their phraseology, or their form. That is not a fault, and

no reporter, except when in a jocular mood, grumbles at it. But there are faults at which he does grumble seriously—faults that make his work needlessly difficult, and that detract greatly from the impression which the speaker desires to produce upon his hearers. A defect that is remediable becomes irritating when it is persisted in until it gains the force of an ineradicable habit, and this is what takes place with a certain proportion of public speakers. The chief difficulty—the root difficulty, of which others are the outcome—is the lack of the power to manage the voice properly. When a leading Q.C. speaks not only rapidly but softly, so that his voice just reaches the ears of the judge and of the rival counsel sitting next to him; or when the judge mutters and mumbles so that by straining their ears the counsel in the front row can just make out his meaning—the work of the reporter is made needlessly arduous and uncertain. Judges and counsel should remember that they are in a public court, a court to which the public have access because the public are in the eyes of English law entitled to hear what is taking place, and with this knowledge in mind they should speak so as to be heard all over the court. Often litigants interested in the actual cases before the courts are unable to hear what is said, and go away dissatisfied merely because counsel have mumbled instead of speaking out. This habit has increased greatly since the old oratorical style of addressing the court has gone out of fashion. A series of hurried conversations between judge and counsel is nowadays very common, and even when they speak, one at a time, it is difficult enough to hear what they say.

Another conspicuous fault—an instance of the failure to manage the voice properly—is the habit of dropping the voice at the close of a sentence. The termination of a sentence affords an opportunity for taking breath: as a long sentence approaches its conclusion, the lungs become greatly exhausted of air, and there is a tendency to lower the tone as one method of reducing the exertion. But there is no necessity to lower the tone: the exertion can be reduced without doing so. The best orators are those who train themselves to over-

come this practice. When Matthew Arnold went to America, and found himself called upon to address large audiences, he was wise enough to get hints from those who were able to point out the right way to make himself heard. At Boston, he had a theological orator to go with him, to hear him rehearse his address in the hall where he was, later in the day, to deliver it before an audience. This experienced critic stopped him every time he dropped his voice, and apparently had to stop him many times before the English poet was cured of his failing. That was the right course to take, and many a speaker would be all the better if he would make experiments with a severe critic willing to tell him relentlessly of his faults. Mr. Holyoake, who has made a special study of public speakers and their shortcomings, lay great stress on the importance of pronouncing not only the final words of sentences, but also the final consonants of words with great distinctness. Of W. J. Fox, one of the leading Anti-Corn Law orators, he says that his voice was neither loud nor strong, but that it was heard in every part of Covent Garden Theatre, by reason of the clearness with which he pronounced the final consonants of the words he spoke. This is just what the reporter wants every speaker to do, and he wants it for the same reason that the ordinary hearer wants it, namely, that he may know what it is that the speaker says, and therefore be able to grasp with certainty the speaker's meaning.—(*Phonetic Journal.*)

## Thought and sentiment and not number of words constitute the main character of a speech.

“Has he finished his speech?” “Nothing like it; he has spoken five columns, and there are five more to follow!” Remarks such as these indicated the manner in which pressmen regarded public utterances. It seemed cruel to judge of speeches by the number of words rather than by the thought and sentiment expressed, but when the reporter had taken his “turn” and had to make his transcription before joining the domestic circle, he naturally felt



more concern about the length of the transcript than the ideas contained in it. Not that reporters did not think of the matter of a speech. They followed the speech more closely than the ordinary listeners, and were better critics as to its composition and delivery. The notion that the main characteristic of a speech which concerned the reporter was the rate of speed of its delivery, was a popular delusion. Speed was by no means the most important element, and few speakers ordinarily outstripped the reporter's pen. Speakers who gesticulated much were seldom fast speakers. It was the quiet conversational style of speech in which great rapidity is attained. Mr. Gladstone was a very deliberate speaker and not difficult to follow, rarely speaking more than 130 words a minute. \* \* \*

Lack of distinctness occasioned more trouble than quickness of utterance. Reporters disliked an orator who would not "speak up like a man." Then, again, much depended upon the structure of the sentences. It was very disagreeable to report a speaker who never finished his sentences. Speakers too often made misquotations. These had to be rectified, or the blame would rest on the reporter's shoulders.

The subjects with which a reporter had to deal covered so wide an area that he needed an almost encyclopædic amount of general information. Reporters were not insensible to the vigor and intellect and emotion in the speeches they reported. There was much of the marvellous effect of the human voice, with its delicate shades of meaning that they could not reproduce upon paper. It was, however, a satisfaction to reporters that by their united efforts so much of the spirit as well as the language of public addresses could be indicated through the press.—(*T. A. Reed.*)

**Who is better able to judge of the effectiveness of a speech, as a speech, than the reporter who has to take it down?**

Others may perhaps be more fit to decide as to its merits

as a piece of argument or as an accurate and exhaustive statement of the subject with which it deals ; but the reporter applies to it tests which concern its qualities as a public address. Was it clearly spoken so that every word could be heard ? Were the sentences constructed grammatically, and completed, or did they run one into another in a hopelessly bewildering manner ? Did the speaker make it quite clear when he was quoting, what he was quoting from, and where the quotation began and ended ? Did he quote correctly ? These and other similar inquiries constitute the tests by which the reporter is prepared to judge the speeches he hears. They all affect the manner in which his work is to be performed. The speaker who comes up to his requirements is the man whom he enjoys reporting—the man who makes his occupation as a reporter a pleasure and not a penance. The public speaker who will consult the experienced shorthand scribe whose duty it is to take down his observations on the affairs of the nation, or on matters of smaller moment, will almost certainly receive hints of great value.

“ But,” we can imagine the public speaker remarking, “ I am not sure that I ought to be guided in such a matter by the reporters. When I address an audience, I do so not with the object of pleasing the pressmen who sit round the reporters’ table, but with the object of convincing my general hearers. My concern is with them first, and only secondarily with the reporters.” This is very true. Yet by speaking so as to satisfy the reporters, the public orator will speak so as to satisfy his other hearers. For what is it, after all, that the reporters want ? They do not ask to be treated differently from the audience. They only ask that the speech shall be so constructed as to be intelligible to them, and so delivered as to be readily taken down with accuracy. Within bounds they do not object to a fast speaker : they know too well that some slow speakers are horrible bores, and that what they have to say is often uttered with so much hesitation and inconsequence that only with the utmost difficulty can an intelligible report be made of it at all. But they demand distinct-

ness of utterance : they ask that the speech shall not be *mumbled*, but shall be *delivered* so that it can be heard by all. They ask that the sentences shall not be involved or mixed, and that ideas should be expressed in some sort of order. These are just the qualities that the ordinary hearer looks for, and prizes most when he comes across them. The reporter is only a specialized hearer. His primary business is to hear what is said, and if he is more vividly conscious than other hearers of the nature of the speaker's short-comings, it is because by the necessities of his special work, he is compelled to pay closer attention to the speaker, his language and mode of delivery, than any other listener. But he does not ask for anything that the ordinary hearer would not welcome. The fact is, that the reporter is the most diligent of all listeners ; he has the greatest and most varied experience of public speakers ; their faults affect him more seriously than they affect any one else ; and he may therefore reasonably claim to be a trustworthy critic of their performances.

Many speakers must have wished that they could hear themselves as others hear them. Perhaps one of these days, Mr. Edison's phonograph may be utilized advantageously in this way. But we can imagine with what horror and remorse certain people, who afflict their fellows with what they are pleased to term oratory, would listen to the reproduction of one of their badly-constructed, ill-spoken, and imperfectly articulated addresses. For some such men the ordeal would indeed be a terrible one. People who intend to become public speakers sometimes go through a preliminary course of training. They are to be commended. But too often the training consists only of such help as a professor of elocution can render. Elocution is a good thing in itself, but it is only one of the requisites of effective oratory. When undue attention is given to it, it is prone to degenerate into affectation. The man who is an elocutionist and nothing more, is an intolerable bore as a speaker. Let the would-be orator consult the reporters, and he will at all events learn what to avoid. The reporter as the representative hearer—the typical hearer—is entitled to great consideration—in this matter. Why indeed should

not a few reporters of experience set up as instructors in the art of public speaking, so that in that future which is to bring forth so many other perfect things, we may have a Parliament of perfect speakers, a bench of Judges whose every utterance reaches the shorthand writer, and a generation of platform orators to whom it will be a pleasure to listen? Why not?—(*Phonetic Journal.*)

### **In condensation of a speech the reporter should separate the chaff from the wheat.**

There is one journalistic function more important than even the ability to take a full note, and that is the art of condensation. And it is the latter in which the newspaper tyro is usually deficient. He has not yet learned how "to follow the rules of an abridgment," and finds himself at a disadvantage when placed alongside one who, though knowing nothing perhaps of shorthand, yet has acquired the art of separating the chaff from the wheat, and who is consequently able to present facts and arguments in a terse and readable form. He takes much too full notes, and when he comes to transcribe them finds himself lost among a multitude of words. In such a case, however, the fault lies with the individual and cannot be laid to the charge of the art. It is one, moreover, which time and experience will rectify, unless the reporter is one of those impracticable personages who can never be made to comprehend that the excellence of a report does not consist in its length, and that in many cases more real information may be conveyed in a dozen or a score of lines than can be gleaned in wading through an entire column consisting for the most part of common place.—(*Phonetic Journal.*)

### **Truthfulness or Impartiality in a Reporter.**

The reporter must keep himself as absolutely free from malice as a judge, otherwise he will subject the proprietors of his paper to costly litigation, and bring his own career to an ignominious end. He must seek to master any tendency to exaggeration or depreciation or caricature he may have, and write with the strictest possible

loyalty to fact. By following this simple rule he will win confidence for himself and respect for the journal he represents. He will also have the satisfaction of securing for it readers who may be entirely opposed to, or out of sympathy with, its political teaching.

It does not require a journalistic expert to distinguish between a good, a bad, and an indifferent report. The intelligent reader can quickly discern the difference. Unless an absolutely verbatim reproduction of the *ipsissima verba* of the orator is required, the journalist will best show his competence and his qualifications who strips the speech of all introductory formalities and unnecessary verbiage or redundancy ; who corrects grammatical errors and removes structural inelegancies ; who never leaves unexplained a passage or phrase suggested by some incident in the meeting, such as a call from a dissentient or a cheer from a sympathiser ; who brings out the temper of the audience by the notices he introduces of the characteristic or peculiar interruptions, and, when a "scene" occurs, succeeds in presenting a literary photograph of it, without the use of a word suggestive of partiality or of onesidedness. Two reporters equally skilled in the use of phonography, and even equally anxious to tell the truth, may produce work fitted to create quite different impressions as to the oratorical effectiveness of the speaker, or as to the feeling or responsiveness of the audience he has addressed.—(*John B. Mackie.*)

## Who contribute most to blunders in reports, reporters or speakers?

What a dull world this would be if it were not for the blunders men make ! As we know, the blunders that arise from badly written or misread shorthand have been a source of amusement from time immemorial. Tiro no doubt smiled many times over errors in the transcripts of his disciples ; and Cicero probably had occasion more than once to wax angry over some slip that transformed an eloquent period into utter nonsense. Certainly John Byrom, the originator of Shorthand Associations, records

instances of misreadings concerning which the members of the first London shorthand society made merry more than a century and a half ago. There has grown up in our own time in this country, and across the Atlantic, quite a literature on the subject. There have been, and no doubt are, industrious collectors of errors made by shorthand writers in note-taking and in transcription. Generally the blunders are prosaic enough : sometimes they read like brilliant attempts at wit. They have supplied material for many a smart paragraph, but the mistakes themselves owe their origin often to some cause in which lurks no suggestion of a joke—a bad headache or bodily fatigue consequent upon a long stretch of work.

With the one exception of compositors, reporters are credited with more blunders than any other class of workers. The fact is that, like compositors, they have to bear the burden of other men's mistakes as well as their own. If accurate statistics could be obtained, we have no doubt that it would be found that more blunders are made every day through badly-written long hand than through badly written shorthand. But men expect mistakes in long-hand. Experience has taught them that they are unavoidable, and they take them as a matter of course. In the more difficult art of shorthand writing greater accuracy is expected, and its absence is recognized as calling conspicuously for comment. Nevertheless, as bad handwriting is responsible for many an error for which the compositor is blamed, so bad speaking is responsible for many of the errors supposed to be perpetrated by reporters. The reporter is really a liberal corrector of speakers, blunders, though he seldom gets credit for his labours in this direction. We remember hearing the managing director of a public company conclude a speech at an annual meeting by expressing the hope that the success of the company might be greater in the past than it had been in the future ! What would have been the fate of the unwary reporter if he had transcribed that observation verbatim ? To whom would the blunder have been attributed ? Every body knows that the whole of the blame would have fallen on the reporter.

We are all human, and we all, whether we write shorthand or not, make blunders. But we all desire not to make them. In order to avoid them we have to know how they are likely to arise, and what precautions we can take to prevent them. The reporter can not alter the fact that a certain speaker is indistinct, or that a certain public building is so badly constructed that it is difficult to catch the speaker's voice. He cannot help becoming fatigued sometimes when work presses, and his time for rest and recreation is unduly curtailed. He cannot help making a slip occasionally when transcribing against time. But he can prevent blunders that are due to badly-written shorthand. When two words, which according to the rules of system should be represented invariably by different outlines, are habitually written with the same outline, danger is likely to result. A thorough knowledge of the system is the necessary and indispensable condition for the avoidance of one class of errors; and in this connection the collections of blunders are serviceable to teachers and pupils. They show that the distinctions made in the text-books rest on real experience; and that there is sound reason in the facts of the language itself for some of the rules of the system, which at first sight may appear to be mere refinements. Complete mastery of the art as propounded in the text-books is the one sure way to eliminate the liability to all the more gross and reprehensible blunders—those that ought not to occur. As to others, we cannot entirely avoid them. But we can learn from them the necessity for perpetual vigilance; we can accustom ourselves, whether our work is that of the reporter in Parliament, the shorthand writer in the Law Courts, or the shorthand clerk in the office, always to read over our transcripts to see that they are correct. Slips are made in the hurry of business that seem unaccountable afterwards. Most of these we should detect immediately, if we were always to read everything we have written before it leaves us. Blunders therefore have a service to render, they show us how easily most of them could have been avoided or rectified.—(*Phonetic Journal.*)

## “Literary Misfortunes.”

In an article upon the short-time agitation it was stated that “a factory boy had been *shaved* to death” (slaved). George Stephenson, the celebrated engineer, when examined before the Common’s Committee upon Railways, was asked by a member what would happen to the train supposing a cow chanced to stray upon the line. Stephensons’ reply was that he did not know what might be the result to the train, but that “it would be unco bad for the coo.” An accident of this kind recently occurred, and a local newspaper reported, “As the safest way, the engineer put on full steam, dashed up against the cow, and literally cut it into *calves*!” This rather astonishing statement created some surprise, which was, however, put an end to by the next issue of the paper, which stated that “the cow was cut into halves.” Drawin may assert strange things, but the following does not enter into his list of affinities:—that “ants reside in subterranean *taverns* ;” or this: “A live *surgeon* was caught in the Thames, and was sold to the inhabitants (!) at sixpence a pound.” The “Literary Gazette” once made the following apology:—“By the breaking of the head of an *h*, or the misprint of the letter *n*, a very tempting advertisement to invest in certain lines, was entitled ‘Purchase of Railway *Snares*.’” Those who complain of the mismanagement of the great water companies might not be displeased to read that “the scheme proposed by Government is to *bung up* the existing companies,”—what should have been stated was that there was an intention of “buying up” the monopolists. The Directors of the Indigent Old Men’s Society of Edinburgh, on looking for the report of one of their annual meetings in the next morning’s paper, were no doubt astonished to find it reported as the *Indignant* Old Men’s Society. So with a learned bishop, who had been viewing the antiquities of an old church: he was stated to have expressed himself gratified with its *iniquities*! A correspondent of a daily paper recently suggested a remedy for the crowded state of towns by proposing the erection of *submarine* dwellings for the working classes—suburban residences would be quite as comfortable, and freer from damp! The animad-



version of a newspaper upon a public officer—some parochial Bumble—which said he had been “tried in the balance and found *panting*,” was as likely to be correct as if it had said he had been “found wanting.” A child was once reported as having died from eating a large quantity of *piers*—well, stone fruit is said to be rather indigestible. An American paper, describing a political demonstration, averred that the procession was very fine, and nearly two miles long, as was also the prayer of the chaplain. Another American paper reporting the speeches at a Burns’ festival, made one of the orators say—

“O Caledonia ! stern and wild !

*Wet nurse for a poetic child.*”

It must have taxed the ingenuity of the compositor, who set up the paragraph in which we are told “the Christian religion strictly enjoins *mahogany*,” instead of “monogamy.” A serious fight took place lately in a public-house in the Cowgate of Edinburgh, on the occasion of a painting being disposed of by *Raphael*—“raffle” was the mode adopted. A provincial paper speaks of the excitement caused by a recent highway *bobbery* ; and another, in printing the report of a Life Insurance Society, congratulated the members on the low rate of *morality* during the past year. Considerable annoyance was caused at a public meeting by a lady having taken an *historical* fit—“hysteria” was the nature of the attack. In criticising the plan of a public building, the beauty of the edifice was represented as much marred by the number of *acute angels* introduced—“acute angles” being no doubt the object of disapproval. Many *confusions* of the limbs took place at a recent railway accident. In the giving of the surgeon’s statement of the post-mortem examination of the body of a lady supposed to have been poisoned, it was incidentally mentioned that a great deal of *anatomy* had been found—it should have been “antimony.” This latter word crops up again in another place where it is not wanted—as in a recent criticism of a speech by Mr. Gladstone : “What, then, by way of novelty, does Mr. Gladstone propose ? Simply the extension to the other Christians powers of

Turkey of the *antimony* now enjoyed by Roumania." Of course, the word should have been "autonomy." Again, "Mr. Gladstone dwelt on the right which England had earned by expenditure of blood and treasure to interfere in Turkish provinces; but now, with *leopard and a hound*, he has formulated a plan for making the Christian provinces practically autonomous"—a "leap and a bound" was meant here. These two last examples are "first-proof" faults, and were corrected before publication:

In the *Times* report of Disraeli's speech upon the causes of the rebellion in India, that usually exceptionally correct paper made him refer to the law which "permitted Hindoo *windows* to marry." A still more curious instance occurred in the same paper in connection with the Jamaica prosecutions. Mr. Stephens was reported to have said that he had treated Mr. Eyre as he had often treated *obscene* and uninteresting criminals. It was easy to see that this was a misprint for "obscure," but the editor insisted that the error was in the manuscript. Towards the close of the American Civil War, a newspaper contained a strong leader upon the failure of the Southern States to establish their independence, and contained the curious statement that since General Lee had capitulated, the other divisions of the Confederate armies "would, in all likelihood, now commence a *gorilla* warfare"—guerilla, of course, was here meant. About the same time, there appeared a report of the seizure of the goods of a certain refractory gentleman for the non-payment of a local tax which had been the occasion of much trouble in one of our northern cities, and mention was made of one article which had been seized among the rest, and this was characterised as "an *eloquent* chest of drawers." In complimenting a soldier as a "battle-scarred veteran," a paper gave him the character of a "battle-scared veteran," and in afterwards inserting an erratum and apology, made matters worse by styling him a *bottle*-scarred veteran!"—(*William Dobson's Literary Frivolities.*)

## **Intellectual and Educational qualifications indispensable to a due fulfilment of reportorial work.**

I do not propose to dwell upon that primary error into which so many have fallen in proposing to themselves to adopt reporting as a profession, without possessing any literary faculty whatever, or even a decent ordinary education, ignorant even of their own tongue, to say nothing of any other. I have so often acted the part of a signalman, and held up the red flag of warning and danger to on-comers of this character, that I trust I may now be relieved of this office. In truth, the danger I refer to is not a mere pitfall from which a fairly qualified person might manage to scramble out only a little injured or bespattered, it is a huge gulf, a Serbonian bog, big enough and deep enough to swallow up a whole army of uninstructed scribes. I assume that there are none present who are likely to be thus engulfed, who have entered upon the practice of shorthand and reporting as a mere mechanical trade. Their membership of this Association, and their attendance at these lectures, is at least some indication that they do not overlook the intellectual and educational qualifications which are indispensable to a due fulfilment of our multifarious functions.-- (*T. A. Reed.*)

## **Stenographic proficiency must be of a very high order.**

Instead of adding to what I have already said elsewhere—I am afraid *ad nauseam*—as to the danger or the absurdity of uneducated persons seeking to become reporters, I feel rather disposed to give a word of caution to the better educated of our novitiates who, presuming upon their attainments and their abilities, are sometimes disposed to look with a lordly disdain upon the more mechanical part of their work, and decline the drudgery which is inseparable from the acquisition of stenographic proficiency. Unlike David Copperfield, they content themselves with a bare knowledge of the elements of some shorthand system, and a very limited amount of manual

dexterity, scorning anything like "mere verbal accuracy," and pluming themselves upon their ability to dress up any speech they may hear in a scholarly fashion. Of course I am far from under-rating this ability; I value it very highly: but it does not suffice to meet the exigencies of modern reporting. The public is very matter-of-fact, and it very much prefers to know what a statesman has actually said, to reading sentences, however polished or eloquent, that have been wrongly attributed to him. Dr. Johnson himself, or even Lord Campbell, would, in these days, hardly earn a guinea a week in reporting speeches. Reports that were thought admirable for the *Gentleman's Magazine* would be utterly repudiated by the *Times* or *Hansard*. No amount of scholarship will enable a reporter in our day to dispense with at least a fair amount of proficiency in shorthand, which can only be acquired by diligent application. Let this, then, be the first pitfall to be indicated in the present lecture. I have seen several rather serious tumbles into it. Not only reporters, but even writers from dictation, will overlay their notes with a good deal of ornamentation when they come to transcribe them. In my own office, not long since, a short speech was dictated to a shorthand amanuensis, who reproduced it with several additional folios of well-constructed sentences which had never been uttered either by the original speaker or the dictator. I need not say that they were mercilessly expunged, and that the further services of the amanuensis were dispensed with. Facile composition is not necessarily good reporting, and it may even betray the possessor into very bad work.—(T. A. Reed.)

## Consequences of a reporter's undue estimate of his speed.

Perhaps one of the commonest pitfalls of young beginners is an undue estimate of their speed in writing. They manage, it may be, to write an easy passage from dictation, at the rate of say 120 or 130 words a minute, and forthwith conclude that they have attained that speed. Such a test is altogether illusory. To form an adequate idea of the speed acquired, a whole speech should be reported, and

the time of its delivery accurately registered. The number of words should be carefully counted from the transcript, and not (as is sometimes done) merely estimated. Or the same thing may be done with writing from dictation for say half-an-hour—not less—from a book with which the writer is not familiar, or from a newspaper, say a leading article or the report of an ordinary speech. In this case the notes or the transcript should be carefully compared with the original, to see whether, with the required speed, the needful accuracy has been attained. The false estimates sometimes made by shorthand writers, young and old, for want of a strictly accurate testing are not a little amusing. A young gentleman, who once applied to me for employment, gravely informed me that his speed was “two or three hundred words a minute” (a hundred or so did not appear to be of much consequence), but a five minutes’ test with the watch in my hand dispelled altogether his fond illusion.—(*T. A. Reed.*)

### **Pitfalls into which reporters fall.**

I need hardly say that one of the most serious difficulties which young reporters (and for that matter, old ones too) experience in their practice of shorthand, is the liability of misreading one word for another; and this applies, not only to words containing the same consonants, but often to words of very different sounds, but represented by somewhat similar outlines. This pitfall of clashing, I suppose, is never wholly escaped. I am sure I have often fallen into it myself, and my most experienced ‘brethren of the craft’ would have no hesitation in making the same humiliating confession. In the phonographic instruction books, lists are given of words containing the same, or very similar, consonants that are liable to clash, unless they are distinguished by some varieties in outline or position—such words as prominent, permanent, pre-eminent; editor, daughter, auditor. There is no great difficulty in learning the distinctive forms or positions provided for these words; and when the beginner has committed them to memory, and has them ready to his hand, he is apt to imagine that he is tolerably safe as the matter of clashes, and need trouble himself no further about them. Nothing could be more

fallacious. The lists I have referred to, useful as they are, are by no means exhaustive. They contain perhaps the most frequent instances of liability to error, but there are hundreds of others occurring now and then as to which the writer should be always on his guard. There are many words written similarly, of which it may be safely said that in ninety-nine cases in a hundred the context would be an unfailing guide as to the word employed ; but what about the hundredth case ? It may be a very unusual case, but the reporter should be equal to the emergency. I am disposed to think that it is *possible* for *any* two words, however dissimilar in character or meaning, to be so placed as to render it difficult to tell by the context which is intended. Is it necessary then to provide for such rare cases by distinctions of outline, so that in no instance should a shorthand character stand for more than one word ? Not at all. But it is necessary that the note-taker should be always on the *qui vive* for possible mistakes of this kind, so that when an outline occurs which (though in the great majority of cases it is perfectly safe,) may from its peculiar connection, run the risk of being mistaken, he may avoid all chance of error by inserting a vowel or some other letter which shall be sufficiently distinctive. It is astonishing how readily the mind, when alert, perceives the necessity for some such distinction even when the hand is following a rapid speaker, and how quickly some method is extemporised for making it. But if the reporter allows his attention to relax, as we are liable to do, and writes in a mechanical way without thinking of the sense, he is likely to drop into one of these pitfalls, of the existence of which he is made painfully aware when he comes to transcribe his notes, and cannot for the life of him tell which of two contending words should be written. He has never, perhaps, found any difficulty with them before, but now it stares him in the face, and he knows not how to meet it : he can only guess, and hope that he has guessed rightly.

I may mention an instance or two occurring in my own practice to illustrate the danger of which I have spoken, and the necessity of watchfulness in order to avoid it. I was once taking notes of

a law case, in which a witness gave evidence as to the proceedings of a detective, and also referred, occasionally, to his own wife. I wrote the word detective *dt-kt-v*, and wife *wi-f*, and one can easily see how these forms might, in rapid writing, so closely resemble each other as to be undistinguishable. One can hardly imagine, however, that two such words as "detective" and "wife" could be confused in reading; but it so happened that in one passage in the evidence it was impossible to tell by the context which of the two words was intended, and, unfortunately, the outlines were so similar as to afford no safe guidance. I could only make a guess, and I have not the slightest notion whether it was a right or a wrong one.

In another instance I found myself tripped by the two words "fished" and "officiate," both of which I write *f-sh-t*. There seems no possible danger of clashing in such a case; but it happened that the witness whom I was reporting was a clergyman, and was giving evidence as to certain rights of fishery which were called in question. He was asked, "I understand you fished (or officiate) at——." Which word was used I could not remember when I came to transcribe the notes; nor did the context assist me in the least; and in this, as in the other case, I can only *hope* that the word I wrote was the correct one.

Now, in both these instances I ought to have seen the danger as I was taking notes, and provided against it; but through inattention or some other cause (probably it *was* inattention) I failed to do so. I am sorry to say that I could mention other cases of a similar character; but, perhaps, this confession of my short-comings will suffice as a warning to others. I am not sanguine enough to hope that even if they follow my advice, and remember my example, they will entirely escape; but the falls may perhaps be less numerous, and the damage to their reputation less serious than they otherwise might have been.

Before altogether leaving this subject, let me say that these clashings are often occasioned by too great a straining after brevity.

It is easy enough to provide contractions for long or frequently recurring words ; it is not always so easy to prevent their being mistaken for other words. As a rule, the longer the form the more distinctive it is ; abbreviations, useful as they are, are usually accompanied by some additional liability to error. *Dr.* is a useful contraction for "director," but a slight mistake in position might sometimes cause it to be misread for "doctor," unless the latter is written in full ; and I have known "doctor" and "dear" clash rather awkwardly. *k* is a serviceable grammologue for "come" ; but I have often known it mistaken for "go," being written too thick, and not quite in position. Such an error could not be made if the word *come* were written with both its consonants. Of course we cannot dispense with these abbreviations ; but in using them we should remember the risk (often, I admit, very slight) which we run in employing them, and never definitively adopt any that have not been well tested in practice. Only very recently in taking notes of a medical lecture in which the word "asthma" frequently occurred, I thought I would drop the *th* and write *s,m*. The form appeared safe enough, and it was not until I came to write the adjective "asthmatic" *s,m,t,k* with the same omission that I saw how easily it might be mistaken for "rheumatic" *r,m,t,k*. I did not give up the abbreviation on that account, but was a little more careful perhaps than I should otherwise have been to keep the *s* perfectly upright whenever the same adjective occurred, so as to prevent the risk of confusion.

I remember a curious instance of clashing arising out of two common and useful abbreviations. The speaker had said, "On the one side I am a conservative and on the other side I am a liberal ;" and the notes were transcribed by an assistant, "On Wednesday I am a conservative, and on Thursday I am a liberal." I remember seeing in a Welsh newspaper the term "Anglo-Saxon" used by a speaker turned into "insignificant Saxon." Such a mistake might seem impossible, and indeed would be but for the fact that "insignificant" is commonly abbreviated to *n-s-g*, which



in very rapid or careless writing might easily be misread for *n-gl*. Here, however, the sense should have been a sufficient guide. As I have said, there is scarcely a contraction that *may* not be thus strangely mistaken, and hence the necessity for constant vigilance, even in the use of tested abbreviations, and a good deal of hesitation before employing untried ones, lest in avoiding "the ills we have" we "fly to others that we know not of."

This vigilance is specially needed when reporting speeches on unfamiliar subjects, or subjects, in which technical, or difficult, or unusual words may be expected to occur. But it is still more required when the *style* of the speaker is peculiar, even though the subject may be very familiar and common-place. There may not be a single difficult word to report but the collocation of words and sentences may be so singular that the greatest care is needed to avoid numberless distressing pitfalls.—(*T. A. Reed.*)

### **A delicate duty to recommend a shorthand writer.**

Some years ago an American gentleman asked me to recommend him a Shorthand writer, and he was so particular about having a "good" man that I could not help suspecting he had had the misfortune to come across a "bad" one: so I asked him if he had. He told me he had had the misfortune to go to a certain place for a Shorthand writer to whom he dictated a number of important letters. Being in a great hurry he was unable to read all the letters, and so trusted to the accuracy of the Shorthand writer. A month afterwards he received a reply to one of them in which the writer wanted to know whether he had written his letters after dining too well. He turned to his copying book and read the letter to which his correspondent referred. In dictating to the Shorthand clerk he had used the words, "bread cast upon the waters," and the Shorthand clerk had transcribed it, "The bread caused pain to the waiters." I remember another very curious translation of this same quotation in which the Shorthand writer rendered it in this fashion, "Buried

cats upon the waters return after many days." Some time ago I was examining a Shorthand writer with a view to recommending him to an appointment which had been placed at my disposal, and taking up a book I read a passage in which occurred the misquoted proverb, "Do not cast your pearls before swine." As I was very busy I dispensed with my usual plan of having the notes transcribed and simply asked the Shorthand writer to read back to me what he had taken from my dictation. The reading of that short passage would give me material for a very lengthy lecture on errors in transcription, but I will content myself with giving you the worst. The phrase "Do not cast pearls before swine" he had written very curiously. He looked at it again and again, and still hesitated to read it. At last I said to him, a little impatiently I fear, "Keep to your notes, read what you have got," and he did so with the following result, "Do not cats prowl before sunrise."

In the case of writers who make such mistakes it is impossible for me to give the excellent advice which the late Mr. Frederick Pitman used to give to his pupils. Some years ago I had a chat with Mr. F. Pitman on the subject of reading of Phonography, and he told me that he always advised his pupils to stand by their notes, that is, to read what they had written, and not attempt, simply because it was a little difficult to read, to distort it into anything else. This is the best plan, but it is only possible to follow it out where the writing is neat and accurate.—(*McEvan.*)

## **Blunders arising from wrongly read shorthand notes.**

What is a blunder? By interviewing the dictionary I find that to blunder is "to mistake grossly from confusion of thought or purpose; to err through want of care or deliberation; to do a thing without forethought, or at haphazard; to flounder; to stumble." The synonymous terms of blunder are "error, mistake or bull." "An error is a departure from that which is right or correct; a mistake is the interchange or taking of one thing for another through

haste, inadvertence, etc. ; blunder is a mistake or error of the grossest kind ; it supposes a person to flounder on his course, either from carelessness, ignorance or stupidity ; a bull is a verbal blunder, containing a laughable incongruity of ideas. An error may be corrected or forgiven ; a mistake may be rectified or overlooked ; a blunder is always considered blamable, and usually exposes a person to shame and ridicule."

On the subject of modern blunders, I will mention a few illustrations (these readings and transcriptions actually occurring) of how easy it is to wrongly read notes if one be careless, heedless, or a little embarrassed:

"Of this eighty acres. "680 acres."●

"I objected to it." "I paid two dollars."

"Lease or agreement." "Lost two agreements."

"He was a little fellow." "He was a little full."

"It settles nothing beyond." "It states nothing but."

"Want of probable cause." "Want of proper cause."

"Since a year last February." "Six years last February."

"In February, two years ago." "In February, two nights ago."

"They captured two parrot guns." "They captured two pirate guns."

"Which way does the land slope?" "Which way does the land slip?"

"I found the horse in that pasture." "I found the horse in that posture."

"Counsel offered paper in evidence." "Counsel brought pauper in evidence."

"What appeared to be the nature of it." "What appeared to be the end of it?"

"The firemen were out in a rain storm." The fireman were out in alone stream."

"Arthur White, the Choctaw evangelist." "Arthur White, the chalk-talk evangelist."

"The showers were not sufficient to meet the wants of millmen."  
"Wants of milkmen."

"In the intervening time he said nothing." In the entire evening time he said nothing."

"I am a physician ; I have had extensive experience." "I am a physician ; I have had extensive sores."

"Her dainty feet were encased in shoes that might have been taken for fairy boots." "Might have been taken for ferry boats."

"What did the man do ? "He came around and assessed me too much." "He came around and sassed me to much."

When a prisoner was arrested by De Witt Toll, esq., late sheriff, he exclaimed, "Oh ! De Witt !" as sworn to by Mr. Toll, and the reporter rendered it, "Oh, do it, do it !"

A medical witness, speaking of the illness of a lady patient, said, "She appeared to be somewhat unstrung and nervous." The transcriber made him say, "She appeared to be somewhat knee-sprung and nervous."

"A minister, preaching a sermon on the death of a gentleman named Samuel, quoted : "And buds and blossoms in the dust." He was surprised to read in the next issue of the paper, "And buds and blows Sam in the dust."

"An attorney asked a female witness how she came to be employed by plaintiff, and she answered, "I saw a sign in the window, "Female clerks wanted here." The blundering reporter-rendered it, "Family colors warranted here."

An orator referred to the different religious sects or denominations said, "Here we have one sect persecuting another," and was so reported, but the transcriber rendered it, "Here we have one sick person feeding another," and so it appeared in the morning papers.—[Abridged from a paper by F. J. Morgan, in the *New York State Stenographers' Association*, 1880.]

## Quick ears, deft fingers and a keen perception sine qua non of accurate reporting.

The necessity for ever-active vigilance and care which we have throughout endeavoured to impress upon the mind of the student will be at once apparent when we show you what utter nonsense may be made in a transcript—perhaps a very important one—by a wrong turn, by rounding an angle, by mixing the hooks, or by any other of the numerous errors that will be sure to result from a careless style of writing. The following are specimens of the errors that have actually occurred :—

### CORRECT VERSION :

Sometimes he had and sometimes  
he hadn't.

Gross receipts.

The mother's prayer.

The woman was baking bread.

Animals that suckle their young.

I came with my brothers Horace  
and Henry.

The leaders of the Crusades were  
a goose and a goat.

System of logic.

In a list, of flowers, instead of  
"Love lies bleeding."

Q. Who are you? A. I am a  
partner in the Low Moor works.

### INCORRECT VERSION :

*Symptoms* he had and *symptoms*  
he hadn't.

Grocery seats.

The *matters prior*.

The woman was *begging* bread.

Animals that *skull* their young.

I came with my brother's *horse*  
and Henry.

Wore a *good Sunday coat*.

*Symptom* of logic.

"*Raw rice pudding*."

A. I am a pauper in the Low  
*Moor Workhouse*!

Of course, some of these absurd blunders may have been the result of defective hearing, or perhaps even owe their birth to the native humour of the reporter; if the first, it naturally follows that one of the paramount requisites for a good note-taker is a quick ear, to which should be added deft fingers and a keen perception.—(Sir Isaac Pitman.)

## The importance of correct phonographic outlines—a reporter cross-examined as to the accuracy of his notes.

In the trial of the leaders of the Land League in Dublin on the 31st December, 1880, Mr. Mills, a shorthand writer, read his notes of a speech delivered by Mr. Parnell at Ennis on the 19th September. The speech concludes thus :—

“ I would say in the words of an Irish poet

“ ‘ Grant us, we pray, but wisdom, peace, and patience,

“ ‘ And we will yet uplift among the nations

“ ‘ Our fair and barren, but unconquered, isle.’ ”

“ (Cheers.)

“ The Solicitor-General.—From what position were you able to take the report ?—I was standing on the platform, near the speakers, close to them, and in a position to hear what they said.

“ Mr. O'Brien, (on the part of Mr. T. D. Sullivan,)—Allow me to ask you the expression he used. “ Fair and barren land ?”—Yes, to the best of my belief.

“ Mr. O'Brien.—To the best of your belief ? Were the words “ fair and fallen ?”—Unfortunately the shorthand character may mean both. (Laughter.) I cannot swear which was the word used.

“ Mr. O'Brien.—You cannot swear to which ? What do you think now ?—The word might have been “ fallen.”

Mr. Mills probably wrote Phonography, and struck the *ln* of *fallen* upward instead of downward, and might have made the *l* more like a straight line than a curve. In this case it would be read as *rn* instead of *ln*. The first letter, *f*, might have been indistinctly written both as to thickness and curvature ; hence what was intended for *f* was read as *b*. On reading his notes three months afterwards he supposed the outline was intended for *barren*, though, no doubt, he heard the word correctly at the time, and wrote what he

intended for *fallen*. On reflection he saw that *fallen* was the more appropriate word. By the rule in the "Manual of Phonography" for writing final *l*, paragraph 163, the *l* should have been struck downward, and the word could not then have been supposed to be *barren*. —(*Phonetic Journal*.)

## The Rev. H. R. Haweis and American Reporters.

The Rev. H. R. Haweis, in his recently-published book, "Travel and Talk," gives the following amusing account of his experiences with American newspaper reporters while on tour in America:—"I can speak with some experience, as they contrived to make from two to four columns a day at Montreal out of me in one week, and published reports of all my lectures, speeches, and sermons, not to say conversations, in Boston and New York, for about two months.. In San Francisco they kept taking snapshots at me all through the sermon, and I appeared in grotesque attitudes, illustrated by verbatim reports. I had sent me, in the Eastern States alone, about eighty columns of these literary curiosities, besides innumerable paragraphs—some of a wildly imaginative character. In reporting any speech or lecture dealing with technicalities, your average shorthand man is as hopeless as most other reporters, and as absolutely unconscious of his shortcomings. He will write down Homer for Herodotus, or Plutarch for Petrarch. He will put Brittany for Britain, and describe events as happening at the North Pole which could only occur at the tropics, and *vice versa*, with calmness and even gusto; but I must admit that he is generally eager to get his copy corrected if he can; but copy he must any how make—if not at his own expense, than at yours. There are, however, reporters and reporters, and every now and then you get a man who happens to know something about your special subject, and you may be thankful; only then he is apt to put into your lecture, not always what you said, but what he thinks you ought to have said. The most barefaced bit of reporting I experienced in America was a professed report of a lecture I gave, at Vassar College. The reporter

had not only not been there, but had evidently not even got his information from anyone who had ; but he had seen a report of a *sermon* I had preached in New York a week before. This did. And so he chopped up phrases from that sermon, interlarded with a few sentences of his own, and gave a report of a Vassar lecture, of the very subject of which he was ignorant.”—(*Phonetic Journal*.)

### **The greatest newspaper lie ever uttered—an undelivered speech reported as delivered.**

The demand made in these days upon our newspapers to supply us with reports of all important speeches within an hour or two of their delivery, and the consequent anxiety there is on an editor's part to secure the manuscripts of such speeches, and have them ready in type beforehand, has led to some absurd blunders. Professor Blackie, at an Edinburg banquet some time since, said he had never prepared a speech beforehand except once, and he thought the result would prevent his ever doing it again. He said—“It was on the occasion of the Burns' centenary. They came to me and said, ‘Blackie, we have you down for a speech.’ I looked at the programme, and saw I was down at the bottom as I am here. I said, ‘There is no use writing a speech. You have put my name at the bottom of the list, and by that time nobody will listen.’ ‘Nonsense,’ they said, ‘you must do it. It is a grand occasion, and you must make a grand speech ; you must build it up architecturally like Cicero, Demosthenes, and the orators of old.’ (Laughter.) Like a good-natured fellow as I was—(renewed laughter)—I wrote out a long speech. Well, at the dinner, people soon got tired, and the most eloquent men were not listened to. When it came to my turn I saw there was no change ; so I merely said, ‘I propose so and so ; good bye,’ and sat down. But next day, there in all the papers was the great speech that I had never delivered a word of,—not only a whole column of type, but sprinkled with ‘hear, hears,’ ‘cheers,’ ‘hurrahs’—(loud laughter)—and all that sort of thing. It was the greatest lie that ever was printed—(laughter)—and you will find it there, making me immortal to the end of the world, wherever the name of Burns is known.”—(*David Macrae, Book of Blunders*.)



## **Report of a pyrotechnic display that had not taken place.**

In Glasgow, some years ago, a case occurred even more ridiculous. There was to be a great exhibition of fireworks at Gilmore Hill, but, owing to the state of the weather, it was, after one or two abortive attempts to begin, postponed. One of the papers, however, had prepared a report beforehand based on the programme, and next day the public were entertained with a long and glowing account of pyrotechnic displays which had never taken place at all.—(*Ibid.*)

## **A purely concocted report of a speech in Parliament by Mr. Wilberforce, M.P.**

Mr. Grant, in his "History of the Newspaper Press," describes an absurd mistake which originated in a practical joke played by one reporter upon another in the House of Commons. A debate took place in the House at the beginning of the present century, on the question of the employment of English labourers, and being unusually dull, a reporter of the name of Morgan O'Sullivan, who had a short time before been imported from Tipperary, said to the only other reporter in the gallery at the time that he felt very drowsy, and would be after taking a little bit of a nap if his coadjutor would promise to tell him afterwards if anything important took place. The other, whose name was Peter Finnerty, promised, and Morgan was soon asleep. After an hour had elapsed, Morgan opened his eyes, and, looking about, asked his friend if anything had happened?

"To be sure there has," said the other; "and something very important, too."

"What about?" asked Morgan, eagerly.

"About the virtues of the Irish potato, Morgan."

"Was it the Irish potato you said, Peter?"

"The Irish potato; and a most eloquent speech it was."

"Thunder and lightning, and me aslape ! Why didn't you stir me up ? "

" It's all the same. I'll read it from my note-book, and you can take it down as I go on," said Peter.

" That I will," said Morgan, with an energy which strangely contrasted with the previous languor of his manner—" now then, Peter, my boy."

Peter, affecting to read from his note-book, commenced thus :—

" The honourable member said that if——"

" Och, be aisy a little bit," interrupted Morgan ; who was the honourable member ? "

Peter, hesitating for a moment—" Was it his name you asked ? Sure it was Mr. Wilberforce."

" Mr. Wilberforce ! Bedad ! and me asleep ! "

Peter resumed. " Mr. Wilberforce said, that it always appeared to him beyond all question, that the great cause why the Irish labourers were as a body so much stronger and capable of enduring so much greater physical fatigue, than the English, was the surpassing virtues of their potato. And he——"

" Peter, my dear fellow," exclaimed Morgan at the mention of the Irish potato, his countenance lighting with ecstasy as he spoke ; " Peter, my dear fellow, this is so important that we must give in the first person."

" Do you think so ? said Peter.

" Throth and I do," answered Morgan.

" Very well." said the other.

Peter then resumed. " And I have no doubt," continued Mr. Wilberforce, " that had it been my lot to be born and reared in——"

" Did the mimber say reared ? " interrupted Morgan, exultingly, evidently associating the word with the growth of potatoes in his " own-blessed country."

"Faith, and he did say reared," observed the other, who then resumed—

"Had it been my lot to be born and reared in Ireland, where my food would have principally consisted of the potato—that most nutritious and salubrious root—instead of being the poor infirm, shrivelled, stunted creature you, Sir, and honourable gentlemen, now behold me, I would have been a tall, stout, athletic man, and able to carry an enormous weight."

Morgan O'Sullivan took it down eagerly and with uncontrollable delight. "Faith, Peter," he cried, "that's what I call thrue eloquence! Go on."

"I hold," continued Mr. Wilberforce, "that root to be invaluable; and the man who first cultivated it in Ireland, I regard as a benefactor of the first magnitude to his country. And more than that, my decided opinion is, that never until we grow potatoes in England in sufficient quantities to feed all our labourers, will those labourers be so able-bodied a class as the Irish ('Hear, hear!' from both sides of the House)."

"Well, by St. Patrick, but that bates everything," observed Morgan, on finishing his notes. "That's rare philosophy. And the other members cried 'Hear, hear!' did they?"

"The other members cried 'Hear, hear,'" answered Peter.

In a quarter of an hour afterwards the House rose.

Peter went away direct to the office of the paper, the *Morning Chronicle*, for which he was employed, while Morgan, in perfect ecstasies at the eulogium which had been pronounced on the virtues of the potatoes of "ould Ireland," ran in breathless haste to a public-house, where the reporters who should have been on duty for the other morning papers were assembled, and having communicated to them the important speech which they had by their absence missed, they asked him to read over his notes to them, which, of course, Morgan readily did. They copied them verbatim, and not being at the time in the best possible condition for judging of the probability

of Mr. Wilberforce delivering such a speech, they repaired to their respective offices, and actually gave a copy of it into the hands of the printer. Next morning it appeared in all the papers, except the one with which Peter Finnerty was connected. The sensation and surprise it created in town exceeded everything. Had it only appeared in one or two of the papers, persons of ordinary intelligence must at once have concluded that there was some mistake about the matter. But its appearing in all the journals except one, and that one at the time not so well known as at other periods of its history, the fact forced, as it were, people to the conclusion that it must have been actually spoken.

In the evening the House met as usual, and Mr. Wilberforce, on the Speaker taking the chair, rose and begged the indulgence of the House for a few moments to a matter which concerned it, as well as himself personally.

"Every honourable member," he observed, "has doubtless read the speech which I am represented as having made on the previous night. With the permission of the House I will read it." (Here the honourable member read the speech amid deafening roars of laughter) "I can assure honorable members that no one could have read this speech with more surprise than I myself did this morning when I found the papers on my breakfast-table. For myself, personally, I care but little about it, though if I were capable of uttering such nonsense as is here put into my mouth, it is high time that, instead of being a member of this House, I were an inmate of some lunatic asylum. It is for the dignity of this House that I feel concerned; for if honourable members were capable of listening to such nonsense, supposing me capable of giving expression to it, it were much more appropriate to call this a theatre for the performance of farces, than a place for the legislative deliberations of the representatives of the nation."

It was proposed by some members to call the printers of the different papers in which the speech appeared to the bar of the House, for a breach of privilege, but the matter was eventually al-

owed to drop. Mr. Wilberforce himself was in favour of this course. He treated the matter in a playful manner, to the great gratification of the House.

It would be impossible to describe the effect produced by the report of such a speech from such a man as Mr. Wilberforce. He had the reputation of being one of the most sedate and judicious men sitting in the House of Commons, and consequently the public were wholly at a loss to account for so strange an effusion. Appearing, as it did, in all the papers but one, and with scarcely the variation of a word, they were, as has been remarked, driven to believe that there could be no mistake as to the speech having been spoken by Mr. Wilberforce. And such being the conclusion to which the public came, there was another which was undoubtedly quite 'logical,—that he had ceased to be himself when he delivered so extraordinary a speech, and that the first thing which his friends ought to do would be to provide him with a keeper until some arrangement could be made for due care being taken of him.—(*Ibid.*)

## **The Prime Minister coming to the rescue of Reporters.**

There was a very large array of reporters at the Conservative demonstration at Exeter on 2nd February 1892. The building had been specially constructed for this meeting at a cost of £1,400, and the accommodation for the reporters was on the same scale of magnitude as all the other arrangements. The press table ran along the front of the platform, and access to it was afforded by a special door, while there was a clear passage for the telegraph messengers preserved between the reporters, seats and the audience. In the course of His Lordship's speech a curious incident happened. At the end of a sentence Lord Salisbury dropped his voice, so that the reporters did not hear the last word. He then took up his tumbler of water, and, whilst he was sipping it overheard the hurried enquiries of the reporters as to what the last word was, and a conflict of opinion as to whether it was "failure" or "success." From the structure of

the sentence it seemed as though His Lordship might have finished by using either word. The Prime Minister comprehended at once what the difficulty was, and as he put down the glass of water with his left hand, he extended his right hand over the edge of the desk and waving it said, "No 'failure,' please," thus correcting the reporter who had told his neighbour that the word should be "success." It was satisfactory to the reporters to have their difficulty settled in this way, as it saved them from hesitation and loss of time in transcribing their notes.—(*Phonetic Journal*.)

## Mr. O'Connell and the Reporters.

O'Connell was probably the only man in the English Parliament who gained a signal victory over the reporters for the London newspapers. Mr. O'Connell had made some comments upon their work offensive to the reporters, who entered into a league never to report a word he might utter in the future. For a week his name was not mentioned in an English newspaper; his most ponderous arguments and brilliant appeals were noted as "a few remarks from an Irish member," to the amusement of the town and the delight of his opponents.

On the following Monday, the chief of these opponents rose to make a carefully prepared speech when O'Connell, with a courteous bow, "begged leave to call the attention of the speaker to the fact that there was a stranger in the gallery." It was the immemorial custom in Parliament to consider the galleries empty. If a member "saw a stranger" in them, the speaker was obliged to order the Sergeant-at-arms to clear them. The reporters were forced to gather up their note-books and retire with all other spectators. No proceedings of Parliament appeared in the morning papers. Mr. O'Connell continued to "see a stranger in the gallery" for five nights, and to triumph over the reporters and his foes. On the sixth they owned themselves beaten, and in future his speeches were published in full with special accuracy.

For two centuries after the establishment of newspapers in England, a war was waged between them and the Government. Cabinets, and Parliamentary leaders found it hard to submit to the criticism of this new power which was neither king, lords, nor commons. This long bloodless war was as momentous and significant in history as any fought on battle-fields.

The press is now recognised as a power in every civilized country, and the contest is over in England, although occasionally a reporter still takes his revenge upon some obnoxious peer or commoner by misquoting his speech. Mr. Balfour, for example, recently was made to say that the Irish members were "filthy with grime" instead of "guilty of crime." A venerable Scotch divine was reported to declare that "drunkenness was jolly" instead of "folly"; and Lord Carnarvon was credited with saying that a bishop had the mind of "a journeyman tailor" instead of "Jeremy Taylor." The anonymous writer of a newspaper wields a terrible power, for he speaks with countless tongues to the ear of the public. No money can recompense him when the day of account comes, if he has made the mistake of speaking cruelly or falsely.—(*Household Words.*)

### The despotic reporter.

On the subject of reporting, Lord Lyttleton, in a letter to the *Birmingham Post* in 1871, wrote: "I do not complain of the reporters. To do so would be unjust in my case—foolish in any case; for we are absolutely at the mercy of those excellent and formidable personages, and to complain would make matters very much worse. I will tell two anecdotes. Mr. Cobbett, during the short time he was in Parliament, incessantly abused the reporters (whom he always called 'reporters' for not fully reporting him. The consequence was that they ended by not reporting him at all. The late Lord Monteagle, when Mr. Spring Rice, in the House of Commons once said something the reporters did not like. They sent him a formal warning that, unless he publicly apologised, reported he should not be. He did not apologize, and reported he was not for two years.

At last the spell was broken by Mr. Murray, the book-seller, starting a newspaper, called the 'Constitution.' To ingratiate himself with Mr. Rice, he reported his speeches, whereupon the others gave in."—(*Jenning's Parliamentary Anecdotes.*)

## **Emphasizing a Speech.**

Mr. Martin, of Galway, once made a speech in which some very peculiar passages occurred, and the reporter underlined them. The printer of the paper, in which the report appeared as written, was called to the bar, but offered to prove that the report was an exact transcript of the member's words. "That may be," said Mr. Martin, but did I speak them in italics?"—(*Ibid.*)

## **Condensation of a speech tests to the utmost the reporter's power of discrimination.**

Next to ability as a shorthand writer, the reporter is, or should be, an adept at condensation. To the uninitiated, no doubt, the successful epitomizing of speeches by the skilled reporter may appear to be mere child's play, but the faculty is only acquired by pressmen after much observation and practice, and the exercise of whatever ability, natural or acquired, they may possess. To supply a half-column report of a speech which would take six times as much space if reproduced fully, will test the powers of discrimination of the reporter to the utmost, and will call into play all the knowledge he possesses of the subject with which the speaker has to deal, in order that he may give prominence to those passages which are of the greatest public interest. The exigencies of journalism do not admit of the reporter taking a verbatim note of the majority of the speeches to which he listens, and afterwards quietly sitting down, steadily going through his "note," deliberately making a selection of those passages which are most important, and weaving them into one harmonious whole. When the reporter is called upon to prepare a condensed report, he endeavours to take just as many notes as are needful for his purpose. To produce a condensed report successfully



under these circumstances, his observant and critical faculties must be constantly exercised throughout the proceeding he is reporting. He must be prompt to seize upon the "points" made by the speaker must describe his chief arguments, and give to the public the orator's main conclusions; and such a report has to be handed in at his office for the printers within a very brief time of the close of the meeting.—(*Alfred Baker, M. I. J. The Newspaper World.*)

### **A model newspaper reports a speaker on his merits.**

When Dickens made the partizan zeal of local newspapers a subject for humorous satire in his narrative of Fatanwill journalism in "Pickwick," he hardly exaggerated the methods of political warfare adopted by local buff and blue organs half-a-century ago. And in a measure his satire has not lost its force to-day. Local editors too often take sides with greater zeal than discretion. The buff organ will only allot the most meagre amount of space for accounts of blue meetings, from which it might be supposed that they were of small importance, but for the trenchant criticism they meet with in the editorial columns— This is a very common result of the practice of running in party grooves, which English local journalism is too readily content to adopt. Yet it must be said on its behalf that this state of things has been largely promoted and fostered by politicians themselves. The London newspapers of course, and some of the large Provincial dailies, report political utterances on both sides with fulness and impartiality, but the country Press does not always follow this good example.

Neither buff nor blue politicians are happy in a constituency till there are two public organs which reflect their respective views. When local newspapers are the creation of one or other side in politics, the less said about the independence of the Press in such instances the better. The number of journals, however, brought into existence or controlled by party, is not, fortunately, considerable; nor is there a prospect that there will ever be many newspapers

manipulated by party wire-pullers. Those behind the scenes know in how many instances such enterprises have been unsuccessful. The model local newspaper is that which, whether buff or blue in politics, reports every speaker on his merits, and has independence enough not to print a column of twaddle simply because it was uttered by its own political champion. It may then hope to have a wider circle of readers who, as Mr. John Morley\* has said, will consult the paper for information, and form their own judgments, if they are so inclined, independently of the leading articles.—(*Ibid.*)

### **Mirth-provoking errors are made by reporters.**

For instance, when he speaks of "Helen of Troy" as "Ellen of Troy," and reports the Earl of Carnarvon as saying, "In these days clergymen are expected to have the wisdom and learning of a journeyman tailor," instead of "the wisdom and learning of Jeremy Taylor."

The Dean's face would pucker with fun when, after the debate on vestments in the Chapter House of Wells Cathedral, at which he said; "If some one should feel disposed to make me a present of a cope with decent sleeves I shall have no objection to wear it in the cathedral," he found himself reported in a London daily as ready "to conduct Divine service in a coat with a dozen sleeves."

The late Bishop Fraser no doubt laughed heartily when he read the report of his speech on waifs and strays—a speech that gave him credit for wondrous solicitude on behalf of the homeless youth of Manchester. "We take these children out of the street," said his lordship, "we clothe them, we tend them, we *watch* over them." And the reporter of one of the morning papers made the Bishop say of the lucky outcasts, "We take these children out of the street, we

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You have intelligence and political training of your own, and my advice to you is to read the news in the papers, to get the information, and then to form your own judgments independently of any conventionally cut-and-dried leading articles.—(*Right Hon. John Morley, M.P.*)

clothe them, we tend them—we *wash* them.” What a splendid example of self-sacrifice and “good works” Bishop Fraser must have given when he picked a city Arab out of the throng of the Manchester Piccadilly, took him home, and washed him !

But the humour of it is eclipsed by many other slips. “My brethern,” remarked an eminent divine in a cathedral in the northern province, “all is yellow to the jaundiced eye ;” and the reporter transcribed it, “All is hollow to the jaunty style.”

“Great is Diana of the Ephesians !” once exclaimed Sir William Harcourt, in one of his most emphatic political speeches ; and the reporter improved the quotation in this novel fashion : “Great Diana ! What a farce this is !”—a drastic estimate of the statesman’s utterances, only outdone by Mr. Caine’s description of him a session or two ago as a “political lurcher.” The poetic orator who quoted the lines,—

“O come, thou goddess fair and free,  
In heaven yclept Euphrosyne,”

probably muttered to himself when he turned to his own speech in the newspaper with delight, and read the practical reporter’s rendering of the quotation :—

“O come, thou goddess fair and free ;  
In heaven she crept and froze her knee.”

More excusable, perhaps, was the reporter’s error in the transcription of Russell Lowell’s speech. Describing the throb and movement of life in London, the American author and diplomatist quoted from the Earth Spirit’s speech in *Faust*, and given in Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus* :—

“Tis thus at the roaring Loom of Time I ply—

Weave for God the Garment thou seest Him by,”—

rendered by the reporter “the roaring loom of the *Times*.”

The writer of “Walnuts and Wine,” in the *Yorkshire Weekly Post*, gossiping about the mistakes of reporters, says : “A rare good story from the Irish law courts was told recently in the course of

the judgment delivered by Chief Baron Palles, on the application for a new trial of the libel action against the *Irish Times* by Mr. Matthew Harris, M.P., who had been awarded £1,000 damages, the newspaper having incorrectly reported, by the omission of the word 'not,' that Delaney had deposed that Mr. Harris was an Invincible. The Chief Baron held that the damages were excessive, and granted a new trial unless the plaintiff agreed to accept £200, including the £50 paid into Court. Baron Dowse concurred, and said the damages were not only excessive, but preposterous. Mistakes, he said, often occurred in papers, and an instance arose in reference to himself. Addressing a Cork jury, he quoted the well-known line from Tennyson's *Locksley Hall* :—

"Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay."

What was his horror to find himself reported in a local paper as having said,—

"Better fifty years of Europe than a circus in Bombay."

The joke told against the American reporter who transcribed an orator's incorrect quotation *Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed major veritas*, into 'I may cuss Plato, I may cuss Socrates, said Major Veritas,' is hardly a better of its kind than this one of Baron Dowse.\*

Another journalist writes: "A compliment to the late John Bright was turned into an insult: 'I have sat at the feet of the gamecock of Birmingham,' should have read 'Gamaliel.' Viscount Cranbrook should have been associated with the Low Moor Ironworks, and not the Low Moor Workhouse. 'He fleeced his thousand flocks,' ought to have been 'he leased his thousand lots;' and 'the blasted Irishmen,' that roused the indignation of a Celtic reporter against an innocent member, was nothing more than 'the Glasgow Irishmen.'

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\* Even a more amusing story is told of another reporter's mistranscription of Baron Dowse's words. The judge expressed the opinion that Irish justices of the peace could no more state a case in legal language than they could write a Greek ode; and the reporter gravely wrote: "Baron Dowse expressed the opinion that Irish justices of the peace could no more state a case in legal language than they could *ride a Greek goat*"

These errors are due chiefly to imperfect hearing ; a few also may be attributed to bad writing, as : ' Those lovely eyes . be damned ; ' and ' Behold the martyr with his shirt on fire,' for ' Behold the martyr in a sheet of fire.' Inhability to hear distinctly is the principal difficulty with which reporters have to contend, and has led to some amusing guesses at truth as when the Prime Minister was reported, with unanimity that betrayed careful comparison, to have declared that our late representative at Washington was in a state of 'suspended animation.

The Archbishop of York, who has an infinite sense of humour, must have chuckled when he read in a newspaper printed in his diocese that he had become a poet. "Those beautiful lines by Bishop Ebor," innocently wrote the reporter, who knew far more about cricket than verse, and had never heard of Bishop Heber.

"Newspaper Reporters and Reporting" is the subject of a lecture given by Mr. James Stewart, and he chats pleasantly and shrewdly about their ways and work. "Another story," he says, "is that of a reporter who was not familiar with Tennyson's well-known lines :—

' Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.'

A speaker concluded an eloquent speech by quoting these lines, and he went to sleep that night thinking how well the peroration would look in type the next morning. His feelings may be imagined when he bought a copy of the paper, and found that his peroration was made to run : ' The speaker concluded by remarking that in his opinion kind hearts were more than coronets, and that simple faith was superior to Norman blood.' Equally funny are the mistakes sometimes made through haste or carelessness in transcribing the shorthand. 'Breezy atmosphere,' in a recent speech by Professor Blackie, in which he was dilating on the glories of Edinburgh, became 'greasy atmosphere ;' 'attenders at clubs in the West End,' in a memorable speech of Mr. John Bright, was transmogrified into

'vendors of gloves in the West End;' 'Died from recent hæmorrhage,' the verdict of a coroner's jury on the body of a woman, was changed into 'Died from her recent marriage,' evidently the blunder of some misanthropic bachelor reporter. In this way, as Professor Blackie said in the letter in which he pointed out the above slip in his own speech, the reporters are unconsciously the means of enlivening speeches which might otherwise be dull reading.—(*John Pendleton.*)

## Haphazard reporting.

Sometimes the reporter will report a lecture a week before it is really delivered, or get hold of a last year's concert programme and criticise the singing of vocalists who may not be singing at all now. And the reporter has been known, so erratic is *genius*, to kill many a man in the newspaper before the man has expired in the flesh.

To his confidence—some people call it assurance—there is no limit; still, he cannot always avoid awkward positions. Newspaper competition in these days is very keen, and in some instances there is barely time to procure the news, much less carefully verify it. An evening paper not long since published a paragraph announcing the failure of a firm of sharebrokers. After a few copies had been rattled off the machine a doubt arose as to whether the intelligence was accurate, and a reporter went in a hansom to the house of a member of the firm. The stockbroker, unconscious of the notoriety he was achieving in commercial circles, was at dinner. The reporter was a very frank reporter. He rang the bell, was ushered into the hall, sent in his card, and obtained an interview. "Pray excuse me for disturbing you at dinner," he said; "*but is it true you've failed?*" It was not true, and that reporter, although a man of considerable *sang-froid*, regained the hansom speedily.—(*Ibid.*)

## Medical Reporting and its difficulties.

Among the many valuable papers read at the Congress of Stenographers, held last summer at Chicago, was one by Mr. William Whitford on "Medical Reporting and its Difficulties." Mr. Whitford holds the position of official stenographer to the American Medical Association, the American Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and other bodies connected with the professions of medicine and surgery. His paper therefore rests on a solid basis of personal knowledge and experience, and his remarks have a corresponding value.

Medical reporting is a branch of professional shorthand work of which little has been said or written, and any contribution on the subject deserves a welcome. There are few other kinds of stenographic work which reveal so forcibly the necessity for high and varied qualifications on the part of the shorthand writer. Medical reporting is, as Mr. Whitford says, the most trying and difficult work that devolves upon the professional shorthand writer. The technicalities employed in the language of the healing art number thousands. The estimate quoted in the paper under notice that from forty to fifty thousand terms are used by practitioners of medicine to designate the names of diseases, muscles, nerves, arteries, bones, ligaments, etc., and the drugs used in the treatment of diseases, may be an exaggeration, but the number is certainly very large, and the phonographer who undertakes medical reporting must master them. Mastering them means something more than merely committing them to memory and familiarizing the hand with the appropriate phonographic forms. Their meaning must be understood, and this involves a preliminary study of medical works and some acquaintance with medical literature. Mr. Whitford is a native of Cornwall. After learning Phonography in this country, he went to Chicago and prepared himself for his work as a reporter by a course of scientific study, paying especial attention to medicine and surgery. The medical stenographer in the United States is of necessity a specialist among shorthand writers. He has to take notes at medical colleges,

hospitals, asylums for the insane, and medical conventions. He is sometimes called upon to report post-mortem examinations at morgues, and even at cemeteries. Sometimes he has to be present at a painful operation, and to take his notes on his knee in an atmosphere laden with the fumes of chloroform or ether. Reporting an ordinary medical lecture, which, in America, usually lasts an hour, is hard work. The professor may take for his topic one special disease, or possibly the therapeutical, physiological and toxicological action of a certain drug. When the subject is some particular disease, the causes of it, the various forms it assumes, its symptoms, its effects on the body or on certain organs, the diagnosis and treatment will be successively explained in a long array of sentences bristling with technicalities. At whatever cost in time or trouble the reporter's medical phraseology must be absolutely correct. He may have to record the names of drugs and the precise quantities to be administered, and an error in a fraction may make a serious difference.

Reporting at asylums for the insane, Mr. Whitford describes as most trying, embarrassing and perplexing of all the duties that fall to the lot of the medical stenographer. The morbid curiosity and extraordinary behaviour of the patients are enough to unnerve all but the most stony of mortals. Medical conventions bring with them their own special difficulties, for not only has the shorthand writer to encounter every variety of speaker, sometimes addressing the meeting from all parts of the room, and delivering the more or less familiar technicalities of the profession, but he hears, again and again the names of eminent German, Russian, French and Italian surgeons or physicians, and unless he has made himself acquainted with their names through a diligent study of the literature of the medical world, he will be utterly at a loss.

What is the moral of all this? Surely if it means anythings it means that the work of the shorthand writer is that of a great profession, entitled to the rank and the dignity accorded to other



professions ; and the world will some day recognize its claims.—  
(*Phonetic Journal.*)

## **Ethics of Reporting—Revising and Editing of speeches by the Reporter:**

Among the papers read at the last annual meeting of the New York State Stenographers' Association, was one of great value not only to all who have, and all who hope to have the task of reporting public speakers, but to public speakers and the general reader as well. The paper was a long one, and occupies 56 pages in the published "Proceedings." Its author, M. Alphonse Desjardins of the official Parliamentary corps of the House of Commons at Ottawa, set himself the formidable task of bringing together and comparing the expressed opinions of many of the leading stenographic experts of the world upon the subject of the duty of the stenographer as a speech-reporter. The reporter in dealing with the raw material with which the speeches that he has to take down furnish him, finds himself confronted with some nice ethical questions. A speech as delivered needs obviously to be revised. The speaker, not aware of the need for revision, looks for a verbatim report, and the public require that the report that is placed before them shall reproduce faithfully the speech as delivered. The reporter owes a duty to himself: he must not prepare a report that will damage his own reputation. He owes a duty to the speaker: he must not misrepresent the speaker, nor must he by a strictly verbatim report render the speaker ridiculous. He owes a duty to the public: he must not deceive them as to the utterances of the speaker. What course is he to take in the supposed instance, which in fact is but a sample of what happens almost daily? The value of Mr. Desjardins's contribution towards the solution of this difficult question lies in the experience and high standing of the men whose opinions he has brought together.

Dr. Zeibig holds strongly that the report should be in all cases "photographic;" that "the embellishments of speeches in the

matter of form, cannot and should not be the province of a stenographer." But the overwhelming mass of testimony is in favor of the reverse view. M. Desjardins quotes the evidence of the late Mr. Charles Ross, of the *Times*, before a Parliamentary committee in 1878. Mr. Ross, who spoke from long experience, said that he did not think there was any speaker who was reported verbatim; that it was the reporter's duty to make improvements in the language or the construction of a sentence; and that the speaker himself would think verbatim reporting to be far from accurate. Mr. Ross explained that he characterized the fullest reports given in the newspapers as "full reports" and added "verbatim reporting has never been known in a newspaper." He was pressed for further explanations and pointed out one thing which—apart from slips of grammar, incomplete sentences and similar obvious blemishes in many spoken speeches which it would serve no useful purpose to reproduce in a report—ought to be borne in mind, but is generally overlooked in discussing this question, viz., the great difference between the circumstances of hearing a speech and reading a speech. The speaker, as he said, must necessarily go on; he must say the same thing sometimes three or four times; this adds to the effect on the hearers, but it does not add to the strength of the argument when one reads it. When you have the speech in print you do not want all the repetitions. In fact the reporter has to edit the speech. Before the Parliamentary committee in 1888, Mr. William Leycester gave evidence precisely similar in effect and almost identical in terms. He too disliked the word "verbatim," felt that it expressed more than the fact, and described the practice of the *Times* as being to give a "full report" which he defined to mean "as full as it would be proper to report anybody." Substantially the opinion entertained by nearly all the experts whom M. Desjardins cites is, that the reporter must be a reviser as well as a recorder of the speeches he gives to the world. How and in what spirit the work of revision should be undertaken, what limitations there should be to the extent and manner of the revision, how far the reporter should be an interpreter of ideas rather than a photographic repro-

ducer of spoken words, these and other practical questions arise as soon as the duty of revision is affirmed.—(*Ibid.*)

## **What are the limits to, what are the principles underlying the revision of speeches by reporters.**

The question discussed by M. Desjardins in his paper referred to in a former article (p. 241), is so interesting and raises so many points as to the duty and the discretion of the reporter, the rights of the speaker, and the demands of the public, that we propose briefly to revert to it. Mr. Gurney-Salter said before a House of Commons Committee that it was the duty of an official shorthand writer to give the very words of a speaker but in an intelligible form by a slight re-arrangement if necessary. This represents the minimum of revision and properly so, for in the class of reporting that Mr. Gurney-Salter had in view a verbatim transcript is expected. Repetitions are not to be omitted; redundances are retained. Yet "re-arranging the words," putting them into "an intelligible form," removes even this class of work from the category of photographic reporting. The idea that the phonographic reporter is to be a sort of human phonograph may therefore be entirely dismissed. He must be a reviser. When he is preparing his transcript for the ordinary newspaper reader he will find a far larger amount of revision desirable than that indicated by Mr. Salter's phrases. The question arises, What are the limits of permissible revision? What principles is he to adopt in this delicate task? Here there is room for considerable variety of opinion. It sounds simple to say that the reporter must content himself with correcting grammatical errors. But sometimes that involves reconstructing whole sentences and altering the phraseology of the speaker. Such expressions as "Well now," "Now then," and similar phrases with which speakers often begin their sentences, may be left out because they add nothing to the meaning. But how far is that principle to be carried? Repetitions add nothing to the meaning; yet a speaker trying to convince

an audience may find it necessary to repeat himself many times in a single speech in order to drive home a proposition which he desires to impress indelibly on the minds of his hearers. The repetitions may be indispensable at the meeting. But the reader does not want them; they will only bore him. What is the reporter to do? "Give everything except redundancies," someone answers. Yes, but what is a redundancy?

M. Desjardins appears to favor very drastic treatment, an extensive editing of speeches, in fact. He points out that very often speakers have to address an audience at a moment's notice. An orator rises with the intention of making a few remarks only; but many incidents occur that generate currents of thought at first vague and uncertain. As he proceeds they become more definite and he expresses them more and more clearly and distinctly. "Why present the first confused words," asks M. Desjardins, "when the speaker was laboring for precisely what he repeats afterwards in distinct and perhaps glowing language? Why keep those ugly repetitions which owe their existence in the speech solely to the fact that the speaker had no time, even in his mind, to fix and arrange his utterances in a presentable shape?" To realise the ideal which these questions suggest, demands the exercise of great tact and judgment. The reporter is not to be a mere speech recorder; he is to co-operate with the speaker. He must understand the subject thoroughly: he must have that literary insight which will enable him to see at once what sentences contain the clear and distinct enunciation of propositions indistinctly expressed in earlier sentences. Any mistake on this point will be fatal to the value of his "revised" transcription. He must be perfectly conscientious, and whether he agrees with the speaker or not, must take care not to revise the speech so as to make it misrepresent the speaker. Education, experience, and character are called for, and without them the work of revision can hardly be undertaken at all.

It is not every expert who would be prepared to carry the duty of revision to such lengths as M. Desjardins indicates. But granting

the need for grammatical revision, the disentangling of confused sentences, the supply of suitable terminations to sentences left uncompleted by the speaker, filling in words where the orator indulged in "suggestive gesticulations," omitting meaningless repetitions, it is not easy to see any valid answer to the contentions of M. Desjardins. No absolute rule can be laid down. The guiding principles upon which the reporter must act in carrying out his indispensable task of revision are, to bear in mind always that his report must be intelligible, readable, free from all ambiguities, true to the expressed ideas of the speaker, and not such as to damage his own reputation as a reporter. He cannot escape the necessity to use discretion, and he cannot be a reporter without being something more; he must be a competent reviser.—(*Ibid.*)

## Speakers and Speakers.

Burns's much-quoted line about seeing ourselves as others see us, comes to the mind as one compares the estimates formed by reporters of speakers whom they have to report with the estimates that the speakers have evidently formed of themselves. There is as great a difference between them as between the "three Johns" into which Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes analyses each one of us. To adopt a popular form of speech there are speakers and speakers, and as no man is a hero to his valet, so no public speaker is a hero to his reporter. Occasional glimpses have been given us of the reporter's impressions of particular public speakers, and of the manner in which their peculiarities appeal to him in relation to the performance of his duties: but it has been reserved for an American stenographer to attempt a classification of speakers from the point of view of the man who has to report them. Mr. Whitford, to whom we referred recently in an article on "Medical Reporting," has made the attempt. His classification is based expressly on his personal experiences in reporting medical conventions, but it will serve for other bodies as well, for human nature is much the same elsewhere, and the same types of speakers that are to be met with in the medical world are encountered outside it.

Mr. Whitford classifies ten kinds of speakers. There is first the moderately slow speaker who, if he has the power of distinct articulation, comes as "a boon and a blessing" to the phonographer. There is the exuberant and tempestuous speaker who, like tempests in general, gives trouble. His exuberance calls for abundant exercise of the condensing skill of the reporter, unless indeed by the terms of his engagement he is required to furnish a verbatim report. There is the musical, flowery speaker, delightful sometimes to listen to, but presenting difficulties of his own, especially if he is of the sort given to quoting unknown poets without naming them or giving any other indication of the fact of quotation than such as is conveyed by the rhythm of the cited passage. Another type is the loud husky speaker. Generally he is indistinct, and when he jumps up in a remote corner of the room you are almost certain to discover that some words in every sentence are quite undistinguishable. Strange it is that so many men can address audiences year after year without learning that loudness is not of itself so essential as distinctness. The rapid and spasmodic speaker is, unfortunately, by no means uncommon. If he were only rapid it would not matter so much from the reporter's point of view. Mere rapidity of utterance can be dealt with, but this type of speaker is, as Mr. Whitford suggests, addicted to "hurling disconnected sentences at you;" and disconnected sentences are awkward things to put straight. You have to be able to define the man's precise meaning, which is more than his ordinary hearers can do, and which you cannot help suspecting sometimes is more than he could quite do himself; and when you have pieced fragments of sentences together and supplied them with a coherent meaning, he will take the sole credit for the performance if you have done it skilfully, and you will get the solo blame for it if you have done it badly. The excessively rapid speaker, the man whose speed is always abnormal, calls for no comment. He is a reality and has to be put up with. There is the irrepressible speaker, the man who makes a point of speaking always. Very rarely does it happen that he has anything to say worth hearing. The stereotyped formal "Mr. Blank then addressed the meeting," does more than

ample justice to the value of his observations. He is usually long-winded : having nothing to say it takes him a long time to say it all. There are two types that earn the commendation of the reporter as well as the applause of the audiences they address. One is the clear, distinct, unassuming speaker who speaks with absolute precision and correctness. Truly does Mr. Whitford observe that this man is a *rara avis*. But he does exist. Better than he, is the orator who beginning his speech at a deliberate pace and in a "measured, distinct, far-reaching tone of voice," becomes, as he proceeds, influenced by the magnetism of his audience and their rapt attention, and rises to "rare flights of oratory." This man is the highest type of all—an example of the genius that is born, not made.

The study of all these types of speaker is an education in itself; and the intelligent reporter by the very nature of his vocation is compelled consciously or unconsciously to study them. He has to train himself so as to be ready to encounter them all without the fear that anyone of them will baffle him ; and the discipline is a valuable one.—(*Ibid.*)

## Silence of the Press—how bought?

There is open bribery of the Press which everybody sees. A newspaper has free passes to places of amusement, which are not sent from disinterested motives. If an exhibition is to be opened, there is always a Press day and a sumptuous luncheon. If a new railway line is to be made, journalists will be conveyed over the route free of cost, and entertained in princely style. All this is really bribery, but it is above board. What I wish to refer to are the cases where silence has been bought by gold. Every reporter whose duties take him much into police courts is subject to offers of money if he undertakes not to allude to certain charges. Business men sometimes find themselves locked up for being drunk, and have to appear before a magistrate. I have known on more than a single occasion one of these cowardly drunkards throw half-a-crown upon the reporters' table, with the exclamation,

"There, you fellows, buy a drink with that, and don't mention my case." The money has generally followed pretty quickly after the briber, and the reporters have taken good care to revenge themselves by giving all the details, particularly mentioning the defendant's business and address. I remember, however, an instance in which a bribe was successful. A most serious charge was made against a clergyman. There was but one reporter present. The solicitor saw the journalist, and after some conversation he asked what he would take to make no reference to the charge. The reporter hesitated, and, thinking he had better fly high, said £500. He was offered £50. Oh, no, he would not think of it. Then more and more was offered, but he held out for £500. Unless the sum was paid, he said, by four o'clock that afternoon, his report would be sent to all the London papers. At last it was agreed the money should be paid. Would he take a cheque? No. Notes? No; he must have gold. And five hundred sovereigns were shortly afterwards counted out to him in an hotel, and his shorthand book was pitched into the fire. Bribes just as high have been offered to other journalists, but without avail. One of the best-known London Pressmen was not long ago in a certain law court when a case implicating some prominent person was mentioned. He did not want it for his own paper, but he thought he might earn a modest five shillings by writing a paragraph for one of the news agencies. He did, but before sending it away the solicitor in the matter asked what he would take to keep the subject quiet. The Pressman was not going to have his reputation tampered with, so he declined to negotiate. Would he take £100? No. A hundred and fifty, two hundred, three hundred? He was obdurate. He would take no bribe; all the money he had he would earn honestly. So he sent his paragraph. But it was not used, and he was not paid for his trouble. Thus is virtue rewarded.—*Cassell's Saturday Journal*.



## The true relation of shorthand to Journalism.

*A Paper read by Mr. T. A. Read before the Institute of Journalists at Norwich, at the Autumn Meeting, 1894.*

Notwithstanding all that has been said and written by those of us who have come to be regarded as shorthand veterans and, in some respects, as guides, one or two serious misconceptions still exist as to the true relation of shorthand to journalism : and I think that a few minutes may not be unprofitably spent in the endeavour to remove them. That is the object of the present paper. As to the first of these misconceptions, I propose to say very little. It can hardly exist in an assembly like this, consisting of practical journalists ; but we have all heard of it, and have, no doubt, often smiled at the folly which it involves. I refer to the notion sometimes entertained by young aspirants to journalism that the only qualification that they need, at any rate for the reporting department of the craft, is a good knowledge of shorthand, the ability, that is, to write so many hundred words per minute. I, for one, have been trying all my life to dispel this illusion, but it seems still to survive in certain quarters, and it will probably never die out altogether. We all know cases in which some half-instructed youth has purchased a shorthand text-book, mastered all its details, devoted himself with praiseworthy energy to the attainment of a considerable speed in writing, then submitted himself for examination, and secured what is known as a "speed certificate," which he flourishes in the face of all and sundry as gospel proof of his fitness to enter upon the reporter's calling. Sooner or later a time of disillusion comes. He tries his hand, it may be, at a speech of only moderate difficulty, requiring a little professional manipulation, or perhaps some reasonable condensation, and the result is a hopeless failure. He may blunder on at first all unconscious of the failure, or he may have sense enough to discover that his shorthand may possibly serve him as a junior clerk in a commercial office, but will never enable him to climb even the lowest rounds of the journalistic ladder. One is inclined to pity the young experimentalist, but I am not sure that he needs the pity. His shorthand

study and practice have given him a useful educational discipline, and at any rate kept him out of mischief. It certainly will have done him no harm, and may prove a benefit to him, though not perhaps in the precise way that he himself contemplated.

The very wide extension and popularisation of shorthand during the last decade or two, in consequence of the growing demand for it for clerical purposes, may perhaps account for the inrush of unqualified competitors for newspaper reporting work. If so, I suppose I ought to plead guilty to having been to no small extent instrumental in bringing about the condition of things that we all deprecate. But until the sin is brought home to me a little more specifically, I am not inclined to say "peccavi." There is a wide field for shorthand quite outside the walks of journalism, and to tell the truth I take credit rather than blame to myself for having done something towards enabling, and even encouraging, my younger brothers and sisters to enter it, even although here and there an "outsider," if he may be so called finds his way through unaccustomed channels into our own ranks. After all we are not a very exclusive body, and I hope and believe that we are always ready to welcome a skilled and well qualified colleague whatever the means of his introduction.

Dismissing then the absurd notion that a mastery of shorthand, however complete, is of *itself* a sufficient qualification for the reporter's calling, let me say a word or two on the other misconception which is entertained by a certain class of what I must call ill-informed pressmen, namely, that shorthand is of little or no use to a journalist, and that its acquisition should rather be discouraged than recommended. "Shorthand"—so I have often been told—"is a mere mechanical art, and is beneath the consideration of a man who possesses the intellectual acquirements through which alone success in any department of journalism can be obtained. The power to write down 300, or for the matter of that 3,000 words a minute, and transcribe them accurately is of no use whatever in these days when everything has to be boiled down and presented, like Liebig's Extract,

in a highly concentrated form. Besides, the man who uses shorthand is apt to rely upon it rather than upon his memory and his judgment. He becomes a slave to its use and is absolutely worthless without it." Indeed, to accept the confident criticism of some of our anti-stenographic friends, one would have to come to the conclusion that the mental condition of a shorthand writer must be bordering on imbecility, if it has not quite reached it. I was once seriously asked by a literary friend whether the study of shorthand had not a weakening effect on the brain. That was just when I was about to commence a long and elaborate article on "The Study of Shorthand as a Mental Discipline!" In the Biography of Lord Campbell who did a great deal of reporting in his younger days, it is said that he never would learn shorthand, and that he regarded it with something of the contempt of the superior person of the present day. But then it must also be remembered that he had a peculiar aversion to any connection with "those newspaper fellows" of his time, and did his best to conceal the fact that he had ever had anything to do with the Press. The one attitude was as absurd as the other.

Of course we all know that shorthand alone will be of very little service to the member of a newspaper staff, but why should the assumption be made, as it often is, that shorthand is a thing that must necessarily stand alone, that it will not mix with brains, that there is between them a kind of chemical repulsion. I have very often had to combat the notion that a man who is accustomed to take verbatim notes is, *ipso facto*, incapacitated for the work of condensation; and that other gratuitous assumption, that the man who is in the habit of condensing is disqualified for taking verbatim notes when they are required. These are rank heresies. There is nothing mutually exclusive in the two occupations. I know many persons, and I am quite sure that I address many now—who are experts in both. I trust therefore that we may hear the last—it is almost too much to hope—of the unworthy sneer on the one hand "He is only a shorthand note-taker, don't you know," or the supercilious gibe of the verbatim man, "He is nothing but a newspaper reporter."

What then is the true relation of shorthand to journalism? In some of its departments, and those not the lowest, it is *essential*; in others it is *useful*; in all, it should be *encouraged*. So long as the public care to read, as they still do, notwithstanding the boiling down tendency to which I have referred, the utterances of statesmen of high rank, so long newspapers will and must continue to report them, and for this purpose shorthand is a *sine quâ non*; I do not mean shorthand "as she is wrote," by the young man who has gone in for half-a-dozen or a dozen lessons, but shorthand carefully studied and assiduously cultivated. I shall not be understood as suggesting that although a pressman should be able to take a good verbatim note he must follow it slavishly. Even the professional shorthand writer, if he knows his business, exercises a certain editorial supervision over the sentences he dictates or transcribes, and this function as we all know, is still more needed in the case of the newspaper reporter. I am not recommending that notes when taken fully should necessarily be transcribed verbatim; I am only urging that the reporter who has speeches to report, should be able to take them verbatim when required. Even when he has only to supply a very condensed report of a speech it is often a great advantage to be able to catch the precise phraseology of certain important parts of it. The essence of a long oration may be given by a speaker himself in half-a-dozen sentences, and to take down these with accuracy can only be done by the use of shorthand.

## The shorthand writer as a speech reporter.

THE EDITOR, PHONETIC JOURNAL.

SIR,—In your issue of 5th May, you state: "M. Desjardins appears to favor very drastic treatment, an extensive editing of speeches, in fact." By this sentence I am made to appear in quite a different light from the one I thought and wished to appear in, for I have never dared to "favor very drastic treatment" of speeches. I know that further on, to make good the above conclusion, you quote several sentences of my paper pointing out what you consider to be my own opinion in

the matter, which shows your desire to do me justice. But those very quotations have led you to what is, to my mind, an erroneous conclusion as to my own views on the question. For, when I stated: "Why present the first confused words, when the speaker was laboring for precisely what he repeats afterwards in distinct and perhaps glowing language. Why keep those ugly repetitions which owe their existence in the speech solely to the fact that the speaker had no time, even in his mind, to fix and arrange his utterances in a presentable shape," I merely wished to point out in so many words how, to my mind, it is absurd to contend, as some do, that every speaker must be reported word for word in all and every case. It was more of an argument than the expression of a deliberate opinion as to the extent a stenographer must edit a speech. The very fact that I took the trouble to quote the opinion of so many experts of various countries, shows that I intended to abide by the verdict of such a jury in so far as the extent of revision is concerned.

Taking my paper as a whole, you will find that I never intended to go a step further than the high authorities I quoted. I gave copious extracts from the writings of Mr. T. A. Reed. Has he not laid down as drastic a rule as you credit me with, when he has written: "The style of some speakers is so broken and disjointed that nothing short of an entire reconstruction of the sentences is needed to render them even passably readable." Again: "Whatever its cause, the reporter should do his best to remedy the defect, taking scrupulous care that while altering the verbal expression he does not misrepresent the sentiments of the speaker. In the case of a very involved sentence, it is a good plan to emancipate yourself entirely from the speaker's phraseology; to do your best to ascertain the speaker's meaning, then to shut your book, or close your eyes, and, oblivious of every word you have written, express the sentiment in your own way." And having given, as instances of easy reporting, the speeches of Mr. Gladstone and the late Lord Derby, he added: "But those are exceptional instances; and in by far the greater number of cases, the words uttered need something more than mere transmission;

they require passing through the alembic of the reporter's brain, there to undergo such transmutation as an intelligent mind deems necessary." I also quoted at length the rule laid down by a great French authority on speech reporting, M. Hypoolite Prévost, for many years chief of the stenographic service of the French Houses of Parliament. He contended that the real extemporization is incompatible with a slavishly literal transcription, and added: "It is therefore necessary to submit the shorthand translation to a discreet but unceasing work of expurgation. . . . Further on: "The sole object that he must have in view is to make the reading of the speech as easy as has been the hearing of it, and that the hearer shall feel the emotions and the impressions of the assembly who heard the speech."

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*Levis, Canada, 29th Sept., 1894.*

ALPHONSE DESJARDINS,

Official Stenographer of the Canadian  
House of Commons.

## Sermon Reporting—Question of copyright, I.

Dr. Parker, of the City Temple, opened what has proved an animated discussion in a letter published in the *Times* on 21st Nov., in which he vehemently protested against the reporting and publication of his sermons without his permission, "a policy," he observed, "which is made the more infamous by working under the plea of pious interest in the spread of religion." To this "Ex-Editor" rejoined that Dr. Parker was at one time one of those preachers who, to use his own words, "are only too glad to have their sermons brought under the notice of the public." The "Ex-Editor" says that Dr. Parker was, on a certain occasion, very indignant with him, because he did not think it worth while to occupy space in the newspaper he conducted with reports of the Doctor's sermons. As to Dr. Parker's legal remedy, various opinions were expressed by lawyers. Mr. H. T. Banning wrote that if in the words of Lord Halsbury in "*Caird v. Sime*," a person preaches "in a church, the

doors of which are thrown open to all mankind," then the preacher had no remedy, but if the public were only admitted on payment, then different considerations might possibly prevail. Mr. F. G. Fitch wrote that some years ago he advised an eminent preacher, who desired to protect his sermons from publication without his consent, to avail himself of the Act of 5 and 6 William IV. c. 65. The preacher, before commencing his sermon, announced that it was copyright, and that whoever published it without his consent would be subject to the pains and penalties by the law provided.

In a letter he addressed to the *Times*, Mr. George Walpole, 34 Cursitor street, London, E.C., wrote :—

Dr. Parker wishes to know "whether a preacher can legally protect his sermons," and he seeks the information through the *Times*. Considering the general tone of his letter, there is something absurd in this endeavour to obtain legal advice through the medium of a newspaper correspondence. However, I have on occasion acted as the "pious Purpin" at the City Temple; I have assisted more than one "thief" of a publisher to make a living out of the Doctor's brains—surely, no mean achievement—and, by way of compensation, I will save the Doctor the expense of consulting his solicitor by doing a little thieving from a work of Mr. Matthias Levy, entitled "Short-hand Notes." So far as I know there are no cases in the books directly dealing with the question whether there is property in sermons. The strong arm of the law is not raised without some considerable leverage of expense, and probably the sermon has not yet been preached which would justify the cost of an appeal to the Courts for its protection. If, however, Dr. Parker desires to do so, he may raise the point, and in my opinion he would succeed. But he must be careful in the framing of his action. He must sue, not on his own behalf—for on his own showing he is a mere *employé* of his congregation—but as a representative of "the people who pay to hear" his sermons. On the cases I will refer to presently, this representative plaintiff will probably succeed in getting an injunction against publishing. He may even get damages; I mean, some of

the congregation may prove that they have been led into reading sermons they had previously heard ; the Court will not be niggardly in dealing with such inflictions. Lectures and sermons may very fairly be said to be analogous ; both are sometimes dull and unprofitable, and (*vide* Dr. Parker) the lecturer and the preacher are, alike, mere workmen for money. The question of the right to publish reports of lectures has been dealt with in two cases. The first is *Abernethy v. Hutchinson* (reported in 1 Hall and Twells, p. 28, and in 3 L. J. Ch., O.S., p. 209). Mr. Abernethy sought to restrain the publishers of the *Lancet* from printing and publishing certain lectures delivered by him at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. The Lord Chancellor in giving judgment said : "One thing is quite clear, that if these lectures have been published from shorthand writers' notes, they have been published from shorthand writers' notes taken by some student, or from shorthand writers' notes taken by some intruder into the lecture room" ; and the decision was that "where persons were admitted as pupils or otherwise to hear these lectures, although they were orally delivered, and although the parties might go to the extent, if they were able to do so, of putting down the whole by means of shorthand, yet they could do that only for the purposes of their own information, and could not publish for profit that which they had not obtained the right of selling." *Nicols v. Frederick Pitman* was a comparatively recent case—in 1884—and is reported in 26 Chancery Division, p. 374. An injunction was sought to restrain the defendant from publishing a lecture delivered by the plaintiff from memory upon "The Dog as the Friend of Man." We now approach the level of the discourses delivered to "people who pay to hear them" at the City Temple. The audience were admitted to the room by tickets issued gratuitously, "no persons had any right to be present in the room except those who were admitted to that privilege by the plaintiff himself, and that privilege did not confer on the persons who heard the lecture any right of publishing it." Mr. Justice Kay said, "Merely taking down a lecture in shorthand is not a breach of any right at all. The question is whether he had a right to publish it and for profit." His Lordship thought not, and, after



referring to the case of *Abernethy v. Hutchinson*, granted the injunction. Having helped Dr. Parker to the understanding of the legal position, I would like to comment upon the tone of the Doctor's letter. I shall be surprised if that letter does not evoke a storm of indignant protest from the great body of Christian preachers. As to the great preachers named by the Doctor, Bishop Magee, Canon Liddon, Mr. Spurgeon, and Mr. Beecher, always recognized that the publication of their sermons was an honor to themselves and a most welcome means of extending their good work. By the aid of shorthand reporting, the wisdom and eloquence of Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's, St. Margaret's and the Metropolitan Tabernacle, in fact the principal pulpits in London and other great centres, are available for the instruction and guidance and enjoyment of scores of thousands of people in this country and across the seas. The great Christian teachers of the day, I am confident, will repudiate any association with the commercial spirit which characterizes Dr. Parker's letter, and will, as they have always done, welcome the opportunity of reaching congregations of many thousands instead of the few hundreds that their places of worship seat.—*The Phonetic Journal*.

## Sermon Reporting—Question of copyright, II.

The recent correspondence in the columns of the *Times*, referred to in our pages last week, has served to draw attention to the peculiar position of the pulpit in relation to the press. Dr. Parker, who opened the correspondence, feels aggrieved at the publication of his sermons by others. A sermon is a literary composition which may be used again and again before several congregations in different parts of the country, or even in other parts of the British Empire, or in the United States. But if on its first delivery a newspaper publishes it, the possibility of the preacher utilizing it again is gone for ever. Dr. Parker raises two questions: one, as to whether there is any legal redress for what he terms "theft;" and the other as to whether it is right—we presume he means morally right—to report sermons without the preacher's permission. The second question raises one of those knotty problems in which law and ethics are often at con-

fict. There are cases no doubt in which a man may be reasonably blamed on moral grounds for doing that which legally he is perfectly entitled to do : but whether this is a case in point is a question which we must leave to ethical experts. Our immediate concern is with the question of legality. What the law authorizes is likely to be the standard of conduct in regard to literary as well as other property ; and if the law is morally bad, the remedy is to get it altered.

There has been a great deal of litigation on the subject of copyright, but strangely enough there does not seem to have been a single suit raising the question whether there is copyright in a sermon preached under ordinary conditions. There has been litigation and legislation also concerning lectures, and it is possible that if the question were tested in an action, the term "lecture" might be held to mean a sermon. Indeed, in the *Times* correspondence Mr. Fitch, a well known London solicitor, stated that he had recommended a preacher to avail himself of a certain Act of Parliament which enables lecturers in some specified instances to secure the copyright of their lectures. Mr. Fitch is discreet enough not to say whether he considers the advice sound, but he mentions that the preacher to whom the recommendation was made announced in church before commencing his sermon that it was copyright, and that whoever published it without his consent would subject himself to pains and penalties. Apparently no one felt it worth while to run the risk, and an interesting point remains undecided. The Act to which Mr. Fitch refers is the 5 and 6 William IV., chap. 65. This Act protects lectures delivered "in any school, seminary, institution, or other place," but the protection is only secured if at least two days' previous notice of the intended delivery of the lecture is given to two justices living within five miles of the place where the lecture is to be delivered. The Act expressly does not apply to lectures delivered "in any public school, university or college, or on any public foundation or by any individual, in virtue of or according to any gift, endowment, or foundation:" but this exception does not mean,

as has sometimes been supposed, that there is therefore no copyright in any such lectures. It merely leaves the law relating to those lectures just as it stood prior to the passing of the Act. We find it difficult to believe that lectures or sermons delivered in church were intended to be included in the protection afforded by the Act. There is no reference in it to churches or ecclesiastical buildings of any kind, and we do not think that on any recognized principles of construction those words could be read into the Act.

Apart from the statutory enactment, the preacher has his right at common law, whatever that right may be. What is that right? It is clear that to deliver an address in public is to publish it; and it seems equally clear that the circumstances under which it is delivered may be such as to indicate a desire not to limit the communication of the address in any manner. In the most recently decided case on the subject, the case of *Caird v. Sime*, which was taken to the House of Lords in 1887, the Lord Chancellor (Lord Halsbury) said, "It is intelligible that where a person makes a speech to which all the world is invited either expressly or impliedly to listen, or preaches a sermon in a church, the doors of which are open to all mankind, the mode and manner of publication negative, as it appears to me, any limitation." In other words, anybody is at liberty to reproduce an address given under such circumstances. In this case, as in all the other reported decisions in which a lecturer has been held not to have parted with his copyright by delivery of the lecture, it was found as a matter of fact that all the world were not expressly or impliedly invited to listen. In *Nicols v. Frederick Pitman*, admission to the lecture was by ticket only, and it was held that the lecture was intended for communication to ticket-holders only, and that none of them had any right to reproduce it. Whether it would be legal or practicable to introduce a ticket system in Nonconformist chapels and in that way to prevent the unauthorized publication of sermons delivered there, we do not pretend to say: but having regard to the manner in which the services at these places of worship, as well as at churches, are now conducted, there cannot, we think,

be the slightest doubt that sermons delivered in those buildings come within Lord Halsbury's dictum, and expressly and impliedly addressed to all the world, and that therefore all the world is at liberty to publish them. Undoubtedly this is the view that has been taken by the press of this country, and particularly by the religious press. The preacher's position seems to be precisely analogous to that of the statesman. When Dr. Parker speaks in the City Temple he addresses the world in the same sense in which Lord Rosebery or Mr. Balfour does so at a political meeting; and the same right of reproduction exists in both cases, and for the same reason.—(*Ibid.*)

### A rational verbatim report.

By a "verbatim" report I do not mean anything approaching such a reproduction of actual utterance as is made possible by Mr. Edison's invention. There are very few men in Parliament, or anywhere else, whose extempore speeches would bear actual reproduction. [The phonograph would probably play havoc with many reputations!] I can find no better definition of what I mean to advocate than that used by Mr. T. P. O'Connor—"a rational verbatim report." Unconscious slips in grammar or construction, false starts, and so forth, must be corrected; the unlucky nominative must receive more attention from the reporter than the speaker sometimes gives it. But, withal, there must be an unmistakable and absolutely conclusive record of the speech, and such as to present to the reader a vivid presentment of the personality of the speaker.

It has been urged that a verbatim report would be such an encouragement to "talk" as to involve serious impediment to the progress of public business. This comment is made in ignorance of the actual experience which has attended verbatim reporting in other departments in England and in the Parliamentary systems of other

countries. The experience is that verbatim reports make speakers more careful and concise in their utterance, and, in that way tend to shorten as well as to raise the tone of debate. The calls to order for irrelevancy or repetition would be rarer if the member concerned were liable to be confronted with a faithful record of his speech, exposing its *ambages* and irrelevancy, and justifying at once to the reader the severe form of closure enacted. It might even be suggested that it would strengthen the hand of Mr. Speaker or the Chairman of Committees that the account of every such proceeding should be accompanied by what would be its best possible justification.

There happened just recently an incident to show the practical value of a verbatim report, and the dangers run by the present perfunctory method. On the 23rd of April Sir Wm. Whiteway, the Premier of Newfoundland, was heard at the Bar of the House of Lords to state the views of the Colony upon the Fisheries Question. Here was a matter involving most important issues of Colonial and Imperial policy. Any report of the delegate's address obtainable from the Gallery would have been imperfect. However, Sir Wm. Whiteway read his speech, and prints were handed to the members of the Gallery. The "Hansard" reporter, from the floor of the House, took verbatim notes. Towards the end of this historic speech, Sir William, departing from the print held in his hand, said :—

I may here observe, my Lords, that we represent before you to-night all shades of political opinions in the island of Newfoundland, and therefore our promise to do this may be relied upon as though the Act were passed.

The importance of this emphatic declaration, as binding the Colony and justifying the Imperial Parliament in relying upon the representations of the delegates, can hardly be over-estimated. Yet this declaration is to be found nowhere outside the pages of "Hansard," and could not have been reported at all from the Gallery.

Many men of large Parliamentary experience are in favor of a

practically complete report—a “verbatim” report in the sense I have tried to indicate. The views upon such a question of one whose Parliamentary experience dates back to 1832 cannot fail to have weight, and the characteristic caution with which they are expressed in no way detracts from their value. Speaking in 1877, Mr. Gladstone said :—

“ The main question obviously is this—Does the House desire to have a record of all that is said in debate ?—not an absolute record, for an absolute record is not possible, but a record as nearly absolute as, by the use of the best men, it could be made. Well, that is a question which is, I think, by no means unimportant, and my own leaning is to the conclusion that there is a great deal to be said in favor of having such a record, unless it could be shown that great inconveniences would come in the rear of any plan for obtaining it. The debates of this House are inseparably connected with the decisions of this House, and the decisions of this House are the main element which determine its legislation. It is true that we have a great deal of excellent work done for us by the newspapers, but it is not the business of the newspapers to make a complete record of the proceedings of this House. What concerns the dignity of this House ? What concerns the convenience of the future ? What concerns the best possible system of working the deliberations of this House ? These surely are matters of great interest and great consequence, but they are matters with which the newspapers have nothing whatever to do. *The business of the newspapers in reporting our debates, as in other things, is to cater for a market—to report that which their readers will like to read on the day after the discussion.* But there may be a great deal of matter spoken in this House which is of the smallest possible importance to the reader at his breakfast table next morning, and yet which it is very desirable, and even in many cases very important, to have, at least in some way, placed upon authentic record.”—George Walpole, Editor of Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates—(*Memorandum upon the contract for reporting the debates and proceedings in Parliament.*)

## Slavish and mechanical translation from the first person into the third takes the life and spirit out of reports.

A remarkable illustration of the inconvenience of third person reports occurred in the House of Commons on Monday, the 8th of June, 1891. It was in the debate upon Sir W. Hart Dyke's statement of the manner in which further aid was to be given to elementary education. Three or four speeches hostile to free education were made by Conservative supporters of the Government; and to these speeches Mr. J. Chamberlain replied, speaking, of course, from his usual seat in the corner of the front Opposition bench. Alluding to the Ministerial opponents of free education, Mr. Chamberlain said,

"The hon. gentlemen have told us, with a great show of authority, that experience is conclusively against *our* proposals."

By using the word "our," the right hon. gentlemen identified himself with the Government in the proposal to assist, or to free, education; or rather identified the Government with himself; for the inference deduced would be that the Government had taken their policy from him. The next morning, the *Daily News*, in a large type paragraph, called attention to what it described as a "slip" on Mr. Chamberlain's part, which had caused some amusement. But the point was altogether ignored in the report in the *Daily News*; and even in a full report in the *Times*, giving the complete argument, this particular sentence was paraphrased so that the "slip" was unrecorded. If the sentence had been simply translated into the third person, it would have read,

"The hon. gentlemen *had* told *them* with a great show of authority, that experience *was* conclusively against *their* proposals."

That so completely obscures the point of the "slip" that, rather than write it, the reporter ignored the "slip" altogether. There were two ways out of the difficulty. One was to quote "our

proposals," the other was to transcribe the sentence in the first person thus, "the hon. gentlemen have told us (said the speaker) that experience is against our proposals." In the weekly re-issue of the *Times* reports the difficulty was got over in this way,—

"The hon. members opposite (said the right hon. gentleman) have told us that experience is against our proposals."

It is always better to take a liberty of this kind than to obscure a point by a too mechanical adherence to the third person. The slavish way in which some reporters change "we," "us," and "our," into "they," "them," and "their," often spoils the reports of speeches. When the reference is to the community, it is generally possible to retain "we," "us," and "our," with an immense relief to the reader, and a great gain in the appreciation of the speech. Occasionally, bold spirits deliberately break the conventional rule and write sentences which are given at all fully in the first person, reverting to the third for the purposes of compendious condensation. Judiciously done, this lightens a report very much.

The summing up of the Lord Chief Justice in the great Baccarat case suffered terribly from being turned into the third person. Here is a passage :—

There is no more easy or plausible or more pleasant form of virtue than to condemn our neighbours, who lead different lives from ours, and whose temptations we do not know.—*Times* report.

There was no more plausible and pleasant form of virtue than to condemn their neighbours when they did not lead their own lives, and did not know the temptations to which they were subject.—*Daily News* report.

Could anything exhibit more forcibly the stupidity of slavish and mechanical translation from the first person into the third? This sort of thing takes the life and spirit out of reports and makes them intolerably dull reading. It spoils many lively passages of debate, especially in such speeches as those that are characteristic of Sir W.



Harcourt. On the 9th June 1891, he said, the slightest things that fell from Mr. Balfour were important, because "so many look to see which way he nods." Imagine "nods" being changed to "nodded;" and yet there are some who would insist upon the past tense in this case, though it is the one step from the humorous to the ridiculous. —(*Phonetic Journal.*)

## Lord Dufferin's weighty advice to speakers.

If you write out your speech beforehand, there are one or two precautions to which you had better attend. In the first place, do not have it sent to the reporters interlarded with cheers before it has been delivered, as once was done by an acquaintance of mine, who after all never got an opportunity of speaking; in the next, do not repeat as a speech a couple of pages from some well-known author, as Lord Beaconsfield most strangely did when passing a eulogium on the Duke of Wellington; for only a very great man could afford to take such a liberty; and lastly, do not let the manuscript fall out of your pockets, for there may be practised upon you a trick which was played once in the House of Commons by Sir Thomas Wyse upon an honorable member. Sir Thomas Wyse told me the story himself. The gentleman in question had come down primed with a great oration, but unfortunately he dropped his manuscript. A mischievous colleague picked it up and brought it to Sir Thomas, who had an extraordinary faculty of learning by heart. Some other business being on hand enabled Sir Thomas to retire to a Committee-room and duly prepare himself. When the discussion came on, he watched his opportunity, and contrived to catch the Speaker's eye at the proper moment. A great number of people had been let into the secret, and were watching the effect produced by the stolen thunder upon its rightful proprietor. At first he showed signs of being pleased with support from so unexpected a quarter, but when gradually he recognized his own well-polished periods flowing forth from alien lips, the look of surprise, indignation, and confusion which passed over his countenance was extremely comical.

What, however, I should recommend to a beginner—but only to a beginner—is a suggestion made to me in the hunting field by an eminent Privy Councillor, who was undoubtedly a very powerful speaker, and was able to hold the attention of the House of Commons for long periods at a time. The plan he told me he pursued was the following:—He first, of course, saturated himself with a thorough knowledge of his subject. This, I need not say, must be a preliminary to every good speech. He then carefully constructed a skeleton of his arguments, and impressed this firmly on his memory, after which he went to his study and wrote down as fast as he could lay pen to paper his whole speech from the beginning to the end ; but the moment he had completed his task—and here is the peculiarity of his method—he gathered all the sheets together and put them in the fire without looking at them. He then sat down and repeated the process, and this not once or twice, but three, four, five, or six times. In this way he not only got clearly into his head the articulated structure of his speech, but, having clothed the same ideas over and over again with different forms of expression, when he went down to deliver himself in the House of Commons he had such a wealth of language at his disposal, such a variety in his vocabulary, that he never had to hesitate for the words or to stutter or stumble over a single sentence.

But it is needless to observe that this process, though very effectual for the purpose aimed at, would only be possible to a person who addressed his audience at rare intervals and had ample time at his disposal for the extremely laborious process I have described. Still, it appears to me a mode of procedure which is not unworthy of a beginner's attention, as it would at once give him confidence, fluency, and a clear perception of the line of country he had to traverse ; and this in itself is a great advantage, for very often when a man gives utterance on his legs to a succession of inane or meaningless phrases, it is because for the moment his brain has not supplied him with the necessary material for the proper continuation of his discourse, and his tongue is performing one office while his mind and his memory

are endeavoring to fulfil another. Nor must you suppose that even the most practised of our public men are free from those lapses and infirmities which naturally fill our own minds with terror at the thought of speaking in public. I have seen the late Lord Derby, one of the most eloquent, courageous, and successful speakers that ever charmed the two Houses of Parliament, tremble throughout his frame at the commencement of one of his great speeches. I have seen a Lord Chancellor of England completely lose the thread of his discourse, and, sitting down, confess that he had done so; and I have heard another very famous orator rolling forth platitude after platitude in the most helpless manner, simply because he could not, for the life of him, hit off a satisfactory peroration.

Another practice which I have also found useful has been to dictate a speech over to a shorthand writer immediately before delivering it. When I was in Canada, particularly in remote districts, it frequently happened that the newspaper reporters were not masters of shorthand, or perhaps there was only one shorthand writer among them. As a consequence, they sometimes asked me to say over my speech beforehand to their representative, and I was quite surprised to find how a compliance with their request enabled me to clarify and condense what I intended to say when an hour later I addressed my audience.—(*Address at St. Andrews on being installed Lord Rector of the University, 6th April 1891.*)

## How fast can people Speak ?

### A CHAT WITH A SHORTHAND EXPERT.

"I suppose," said a representative of *Cassell's Saturday Journal* to Mr. Thomas Allen Reed, the veteran shorthand writer and reporter, recently, "you have 'taken down' in your time all sorts and conditions of men—statesmen, lawyers, scientists, doctors, and divines?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Reed with a smile; "I am just celebrating my Jubilee. It is fifty years since I began the study of shorthand

at school. I first learned Lewis's system, but gave it up in 1842 for Phonography, which I have written ever since."

Mr. Reed was too modest to add that his services in the promotion of the art have been deemed worthy of a special testimonial from his friends and admirers, who have recognised the powerful influences of his pen and voice in making shorthand universally popular.

"I have been an all-round man," he continued, "but perhaps I have made a speciality of scientific work and technical reporting. Here is a sample of Professor Huxley's style, and you will see how difficult the task would have been without a little preparation. The professor said, 'It is an utterly erroneous statement to speak of the anchylosis of the primitive vertebræ in the skull. Such things do not exist. There is a differentiation of primary homogeneous cartilage into separate parts in consequence of the process of ossification, etc., etc.'"

"Yes; but no doubt the shorthand signs for these big words are simple forms: *the difficulty would be in reading them aright when you came to transcribe them.*"

"The very fastest speaker I know," continued Mr. Reed, "is Phillips Brooks, of Massachusetts, an American bishop of the Episcopal Church. He is the known terror of reporters in the United States. When he preached in Westminster Abbey, I took the sermon and made a record. The speed throughout exceeded 200 words a minute. It was a continuous rush; the preacher did not stop for breath even."

"The fastest English speakers are, I should imagine, lawyers?"

"Some of the most rapid speaking is in the courts of law. The great difficulty is not so much the rapidity of any one speaker, but the discussions which take place between a good many. I should say the pace often approaches 200 words a minute, or three words per second, with jerks which go beyond that rate. But, as you

know, a good reporter thinks very little of the question of speed in comparison with the man's style. It is the involved style which the note-taker dreads ; and he dislikes extremely the speaker who never finishes his sentences, and whose meaning very often has to be guessed."

"What is the average speed of public speaking ?"

"About 120 words per minute. The lowest is eighty and it runs up to 200. There is tall talk in America that they beat us altogether. Our maximum of 200 words per minute would be thought, they say, nothing of there. I do not like to question the accuracy of the statements that have been made as to what has been accomplished ; but I confess that I should like to have the opportunity of cross-examining the authors of these statements."

"A slow speaker is not necessarily an easy speaker to take ?"

"Oh, no. When a man speaks fast, but distinctly and clearly, it is all plain sailing ; but the slow man, who mutters and mumbles, is our foe."

"How do you like Mr. Gladstone's style ?"

"Personally, I like it very much. Bright was splendid. Bright used, in his early days, to be very difficult, but in latter life he became deliberate and easy. I noticed that Cobden and Bright changed places. Cobden was the easy man and Bright the difficult man when both were young ; and when Bright became easier Cobden grew more difficult. I remember them well during the Anti-Corn Law agitation. The very first political speech I reported was one of Bright's early in the 'forties.' "

"What do you say about the politician of to-day ?"

"Balfour is rapid, but his sentences run and read well. Chamberlain is easy, but rather fast at times. Salisbury is decidedly easy, both on account of his style and moderate speed."

"Is it noticeable to the shorthand writer when a man reads his speech instead of speaking it ?"

"Yes ; it becomes more difficult. In the first place, the reporter feels that he must be exact, because he knows that there is a manuscript with which his report may be compared. Then the reader does not always follow his MS. I have known cases in which I have distinctly traced a man skipping a line or more, from nervousness or inadvertence. As a rule we prefer extemporaneous speakers."

A chance remark brings from Mr. Reed a protest against the common misconception that there is necessarily a real difference between shorthand writing and reporting. It is very well known that there are members of the press who look down upon shorthand writers as mere mechanical drudges ; whilst, on the other hand, certain shorthand writers regard some reporters as stenographically incompetent.

"It is a common delusion," said Mr. Reed, "that a shorthand writer exercises no editorial functions. He must. It is only when he has to swear to his notes that he must be absolutely exact. No man with a high sense of his profession acts upon that principle when mechanical reproduction is unnecessary."

"Would you make grammatical alterations in a judgment?"

"Yes. Even a judgment may need a little verbal editing. I am sometimes asked for how long one can take notes. I have done so for ten hours at a stretch, with only a quarter of an hour's interval, and have in that time written 70,000 words."

Amongst Mr. Reed's other regular engagements, it may be interesting to note, has been the reporting of the proceedings of the Indian National Congress, which has taken him to India three years in succession.

"I believe you had a good deal to do with the first International Shorthand Congress in 1887, presided over by Lord Rosebery?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Reed ; "I was chairman of the Organising Committee, and naturally took an active part in the proceedings."

For my services in this capacity, and for some assistance rendered at a similar gathering in Paris, the French Government sent me the decoration of 'Officier d'Academic.'—(*Cassell's Saturday Journal*, 7th December 1892. Revised by Mr. Reed.)

## Law Court Reporting.

Many people entertain strange misconceptions as to the nature of the tasks that fall to the lot of the professional shorthand writer engaged in the High Court of Justice, and as to the nature of the qualifications without which it is impossible for any man to succeed in that branch of phonographic work. No one can say that shorthand has yet attained its proper recognition as an adjunct of the law court, or that our judicial arrangements with regard to it are entirely satisfactory.

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What is the secret of this admittedly high standard of proficiency among legal shorthand writers? Those who practise in the law courts are men who bring a highly trained intelligence to bear upon their work, and possess the capacity to write at a high rate of speed. The shorthand writer's ability must not be bounded by his dexterity as a penman, if he is to turn out intelligent work. There is knowledge that can be gained only by constant attendance in Court. The Court Reporter must not only be able to take down legal phraseology, but he must understand it, or he will fall into many pitfalls. He must understand the procedure of the Courts, and know something about the various Law Reports from which he will hear counsel reading quotations. He must have access to copies of the Reports, in order to verify any quotation, for, even if he gets down the passages quoted, nothing is more common than for a barrister in his hurry to mis-read; the mistake must not be repeated in the transcript, or the whole blame will be thrown on the shorthand writer.

The work is arduous, and its variety, if it lends a certain charm to it, is not without drawbacks. When a man is engaged to "take

a note" in any particular case, he never knows what is in store for him. The questions at issue may turn upon the details of some intricate machinery; he may have to take down the evidence of engineers bristling with all sorts of technicalities. His next case may be one arising in connection with the silk trade, or with color printing, or with the disposal of various kinds of agricultural produce. Each case brings with it its own technicalities; and the shorthand writer must be prepared to deal equally well with all of them. There are other difficulties. The witnesses may be foreigners who speak broken English, or Englishmen with an unfamiliar dialect. Then there are witnesses who will not "speak up," judges who mumble, counsel who will talk as if they were holding a private conversation with the judge, and a good many people in Court who will talk when they should be silent. And there are uncompleted sentences, slips of the tongue, and occasional lapses into obscurity, all requiring intelligent treatment. The notes have to be taken and the transcript got out often under very great pressure.—(*Phonetic Journal*.)

## The Reporter at work.

Speaking at the annual dinner of the Newspaper Press Fund, the Lord Chancellor said many true things and good things concerning journalism and journalists, and the indebtedness of public speakers to the great fraternity of reporters. He recognizes that public men who desire to have their views made known would fare very badly indeed now-a-days but for the newspaper press and the publicity thereby rendered possible. He was sure, too, as he said, that for the most part even good speakers had reason to be thankful that there was some editing of their speeches, and that the verbatim reporting, which even those, who desired the fullest possible reports in the House of Commons, were beginning to find would not be altogether satisfactory, was not often to be found in the newspaper press. This observation is remarkable not so much for any originality of view as for the frankness with which the word "verbatim" is thrown overboard. Lord Herschell recognizes that the really "verbatim"



report is not only rare, but is generally undesirable. It will be remembered that when under examination before the Select Committee on Parliamentary Reporting, Mr. Leycester of the *Times* was pressed several times with respect to "verbatim" reports, and showed a marked anxiety not to use the word at all. He said that to publish a verbatim report would be generally to make speakers ridiculous; and on being asked what he would mean when he gave instructions for a "verbatim report," he said, "I never use the word 'verbatim,' and should never give such an instruction. A full report is as verbatim as any speaker would like to have."

There have been occasionally some curious disputes as to the right use of this word "verbatim." Critics have suggested that there is no such thing as an absolutely verbatim report, and have pointed out discrepancies between two or more independent "full" reports of the same speech. Injudicious reporters zealous for their calling, have been known to become indignant over the mere suggestion that any full report was not strictly verbatim. The truth is, that except for a few purposes, such as the record of evidence in courts of law, which the shorthand writer is called on to reproduce exactly as uttered, a literally word for word report is seldom required for publication, and would not be creditable either to the speaker or to the reporter. A reporter at home in his armchair may talk glibly of his absolutely verbatim work; but the reporter at work has to produce something very much better. He has to do something more than merely record the *ipsissima verba* of a speaker. He has, as Lord Herschell puts it, to "edit" the speech, or as Mr. Leycester puts it, to "trim" the speech. Repetitions have to be left out, incomplete sentences have to be coaxed into sense, verbs which do not agree with their nominatives, in the speech as delivered, have to be made to agree with them in the speech as reported. In fact an amount of revision has to be undertaken which removes the report entirely from the category of the "verbatim" report. The word becomes inapplicable; and Mr. Leycester's unwillingness to use it is intelligible.

All this has its lesson for the beginner. We do not think that so large a proportion of students of shorthand as was formerly the case, look forward to a seat in the reporters' gallery as the outcome of their phonographic studies. As has been wittily remarked, there is not room for one-hundredth of them; and the multiplicity of avenues open in which their shorthand skill can now be utilized advantageously, has made the Gallery loom smaller in the young phonographer's vision. But the would-be reporter must always bear in mind that while the ability to take a verbatim note will be required of him, that ability by itself is of little journalistic value. The verbatim report may suffice now and then, but in the majority of cases the full report that has been intelligently trimmed, edited, revised and made presentable, is what he will be called upon to supply. To be able to supply this he must train himself; and he will hardly succeed in training himself to that degree of fitness unless he brings to bear the results of a good general education, considerable practice in composition, and an accurate perception of the right use of words. He has to be not a mere mechanical recorder, but an artist, contributing, by means of his trained intelligence, some valuable elements to the finished result—a report presented in such a shape as to be fit for the public eye and the public mind.—(*Ibid.*)

### **The modern Shorthand Reporter.**

Most men, after a certain age, begin to dwell lovingly on the past, and cultivate, quite unconsciously, a tendency to compare it with the present, greatly to the detriment of the latter. Seen through the haze of memory all that was striking and picturesque and satisfactory in the past stands out in relief, while the defects and disadvantages, the troubles and annoyances that accompanied them and caused irritation and anxiety at the time, are forgotten. The successes that encouraged remain in the recollection: the failures that seemed disheartening at the moment have faded from the mind. And so when we take up a book written by a man advanced in years we are not at all surprised to learn that in the writer's opinion certain things were done very much better in his youth than they are

in these degenerate days. Even the journalist is not exempt from this failing. Its roots lie deep in human nature, and it shows itself in men of all types and men of all classes.

Here for instance is Mr. Charles Cooper, the editor of the *Scotsman*, who, after more than fifty years of newspaper work, has become reminiscent. His book, recently published, entitled "An Editor's Retrospect," is full of interest. The experiences of an active journalistic life of half-a-century's duration could hardly be otherwise, and Mr. Cooper has managed to fill his pages with anecdotes and comments that throw important sidelights on many incidents and episodes of an important period in the history of this country and in the history of journalism, too. In the second chapter of his book he indulges in a little criticism at the expense of the modern shorthand reporter, and we think that the criticism is in some respects a little unjust. Quoting a remark which as he aptly observes is one made "by some old journalists" that reporting is now a lost art, and expressing his dissent from it, he assures his readers that there is as good reporting now as ever there was. But he seems to think that in quantity there is too much; and then follows a very ancient piece of criticism: "Reporting, it is said, has become more mechanical and less intellectual. Anybody can write shorthand; and the extension of newspapers has brought many 'bodies' forward as reporters who can do little else than write shorthand." To illustrate this a very antique anecdote, worn threadbare many years ago by constant repetition, is disinterred from the grave in which we thought it had found its final repose; and then a strange moral is drawn. "Mr. Pitman," we are told, has destroyed "reporters" as thinking beings and "has made them into machines!" A terrible offence, verily, if it were true: but we wonder what the "machines" would have to say on the point! "Good reporting," Mr. Cooper proceeds to affirm, is "shorthand mixed with brains." So many men have said the same thing before that we fancied that it was as familiar to reporters as the multiplication table is to schoolboys. But he seems to think that somehow when a reporter has mastered Phonography he ceases to mix any brains with it.

What is the proof? If you take half the reporters of the present day and ask them when they come from a meeting what has been said, "they can no more tell you without reference to their notes than they can fly." Mr. Cooper can remember reporters who could write a report of a speech without looking at their notes, and others who could produce excellent reports without writing shorthand at all. Of course he can; and if he were to inquire he would find many men in the present day who could do precisely the same thing. "There were," he adds, "as good shorthand writers then as now, only they were not machines." It is unfortunately true that there are many men in all callings who do their work mechanically and make very slight demands upon their brains; and it may be true that a larger *number* of these people learn shorthand than formerly. But there were plenty of human "machines" among the workers in Mr. Cooper's early days; and there is no evidence whatever to show that there has been an increase in the *proportion* of the "machines" to the whole body of workers. Indeed, the whole stress of modern competition makes it more and more compulsory upon the shorthand reporter that he shall use his brains. And he does use them, as the work of the phonographic reporters of the *Scotsman* and hundreds of other successful newspapers shows pretty conclusively. The truth is that the conditions of modern journalistic work are making "mechanical" reporting more and more an impossibility. Mr. Cooper's book shows that he has met "editors" who were machines: we wonder whether they were phonographers, too! The reporter who does not use his brains would not use them if he were as ignorant of Phonography as a new-born babe.—(*Phonetic Journal.*)

## Shorthand in Parliamentary Reporting.

The Gallery of the House of Commons is not the place in which one would expect to find the "swiftest" shorthand writers, for the very good reason that the "swiftest" shorthand writing is not required in Parliamentary reporting. It does not at all follow that efficiency in shorthand can be dispensed with. The proprietor of a leading

London daily once told a young gentleman that he could do the work of a reporter without shorthand at all, and that he had nothing to do but to look, listen, and remember. The young gentleman soon found out his mistake, and, though he brought great intelligence, to the work, he ultimately abandoned it. The highest stenographic efficiency will always facilitate a reporter's work ; but still, as a rule, Parliamentary reporting does not call for anything extra in the way of shorthand writing. It is true that the speeches of a few leading statesmen have to be produced verbatim, both in the House of Commons and out of it ; but the amount of verbatim reporting is very small compared with the amount of condensation, and of severe condensation. The rate of speaking in the House of Commons is about three columns an hour. At that rate, an eight hour's sitting would produce twenty-four columns of the *Times*. It seldom produces one-half of that. The report averages from a column to a column and a half an hour. Therefore the task of the reporters who write even the longest report is to select and to omit. The faculty most appreciated in the great bulk of the Gallery reporting for the newspapers is that which was so admirably illustrated for about twenty years in the summary of the Commons which comes before the leaders in the *Times*. During the period named, that column was the best-read column in the *Times*, because it indicated, with laconic crispness, the spirit, feeling, motive, which ran through the debates, and was a trustworthy guide to those who did not read the full reports. That summary was formerly written by Mr. William Leycester, who was one of the reporters, and is now chief of the staff. This is the type of a Gallery career. The realization of it is not assisted by a repute for note-taking. The custom of selecting words and phrases to avoid overburdening the note-book produces a habit of mind not favorable to taking a verbatim note for a long time as compared with the short "turns" in the House. Still, even to a man who is using shorthand merely as a ladder, proficiency will make his work more easy and will enable him to get through it quickly, and so will help him to economise his time for other efforts. Mr. Justin McCarthy, M. P., did his work as a Parliamentary reporter with great facility before

he became one of the editors of the *Morning Star*; and the same may be said of Mr. Cooper, now one of the editors of the *Scotsman*.

High speed in shorthand depends upon a variety of qualifications, which may exist separately or in combination, in different individuals. First of all stands careful study of, and practice in, the highest developments of the system of shorthand in use. If it were possible to make inquiry and examination, it would be found that a very large number of learners stop short of the highest attainment because they have found they can pull through with something lower, and they do not desire to expend more time than they deem necessary on an art which they think they are only using temporarily as a means to an end. In many cases this contentment with a partial conquest proves to be a mistake in the long run. Secondly, there is skill in manipulating the pen or pencil. Such skill seems quite natural to some, and just as unattainable by others. Thirdly, there is a certain amount of power or energy in hand or arm. Strength will sometimes compensate in a measure for lack of manipulative skill; but manipulative skill will often more than compensate for lack of strength. I have known instances of men of very feeble physique and slender frame who attained marvellous command over the pen—not the pencil—and could follow any public speaker. To be able to take a rapid note continuously for any length of time a man must have a certain reserve of energy derived from skill, or strength, or both; and it is only practice, carefully directed to the purpose, that can give the proper control of either, and adjust the relations of one to the other.

If a man can easily write, or aims at being able to write, say, 150 words per minute, continuously, and from that up to 200 words occasionally; if he can read or intends to read his notes as readily as people ordinarily read print, taking any sentence without regard to context, as shorthand writers have to do in Parliamentary Committees, Law Courts, and arbitrations; if a man aims at taking the

notes rapidly and yet so accurately that others can read and transcribe them—it follows that he desires to make the practice of shorthand the main business of life, and the basis of a professional reputation ; and in that case the Gallery is hardly the place for him, if he can keep out of it. If he has already reached a high standard of proficiency, his talents will be thrown away in the Gallery ; if he is still under training, Gallery practice will help him little. It would probably have been a fatal mistake if Mr. T. A. Reed had entered the Gallery, as he was often pressed to do. And it need hardly be said that the Gallery offers no attractions to professional shorthand writers, who regard it as a place to be avoided from their point of view.

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(*Phonetic Journal.*)

## Undelivered Speeches reported.

Lord Rosebery, in his “marginal notes” to Mr. Paul’s lecture at Edinburgh, referred to one important disadvantage that sometimes attends the writing of speeches, namely, “that sometimes when you have sent your speech to the papers, and it has become printed and published, you have not actually delivered it.” There are at least (says the *Daily News*) two memorable instances in comparatively recent times of such a contretemps. The Right Hon. Richard Lalor Shiel, Master of the Mint, a celebrated Parliamentary orator of the forties had arranged for the delivery of an important political speech in the country. Through some fatality, he was unable to keep his engagement. There was no telegraph in those times, and his speech, of which he had sent written copies to the press, appeared in all the daily papers, with the accompaniment of “cheers,” “laughter,” “loud cheers.” In the Parliament of 1874-1880, an Irish member had given to a leading Dublin newspaper the speech which he intended to deliver in a full-dress debate. A namesake of his spoke before him in debate. It was telegraphed to the Dublin office “P. is speaking,” and the speech of the other P., which was in type, appeared in the next morning’s issue.—

(*Phonetic Journal.*)

## How Mr. Gladstone was saved from a mass of misrepresentations.

An interesting illustration of the service that shorthand is able to render to a great public man was afforded by an incident in the electoral campaign of 1885. A number of sturdy disestablishers were striving to get from Mr. Gladstone a declaration in favor of the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. He agreed to receive a deputation from them, but it was arranged that the interview should take place in private. The great statesman, who was then the leader of the Liberal party, had no intention of espousing the agitation against the Established Church; and talking over the expected interview on the previous day with the editor of the *Scotsman*, he was reminded that there was a danger attaching to the private reception of a deputation on an important public question, that whatever he might say would be—quite unintentionally—misrepresented afterwards, the minds of strong partisans being likely to give an inaccurate coloring to their narratives of what had occurred. This view impressed Mr. Gladstone very forcibly, and he invited a suggestion as to a possible remedy. The suggestion was made that a shorthand writer should be employed to take a full note of the proceedings. “The knowledge” it was urged “that a transcript of these notes could be produced would check all possible misrepresentations” The hint was taken, and when the deputation turned up they were surprised to see a shorthand writer present. Some of them disapproved of what they regarded as an intrusion, and showed their dislike. But the wisdom of the course adopted by Mr. Gladstone became evident a few days later when certain inaccurate statements were put forth as to what had occurred at the interview. These were promptly denied, the denial being coupled with a reminder that an accurate record of the proceedings was in existence. The effect was salutary, and the mere presence of a shorthand writer at the interview saved the great statesman from what might have grown into a vast mass of misrepresentations.—(*Phonetic Journal*.)



## Thackeray and the Reporter.

When Thackeray was delivering in Hull his famous course of lectures on "The Four Georges," a young reporter was sent from the office of a local newspaper to take a note of the first lecture. He wrote a fairly long account of it, which appeared. On the morning of its appearance, a letter arrived at the office from Thackeray, requesting that the gentleman who had reported his lecture would call upon him. The note was handed to the reporter, who felt highly elated at receiving an invitation from so distinguished an author. He knew that his report was accurate, and he anticipated nothing but praise from the novelist. And so with an easy mind and a calm conscience, he called on the great man. He was asked to take a seat, and then a conversation occurred which soon undeceived the budding journalist. "Are you the young man who reported my lecture?" asked Thackeray. "I am," was the reply. "Do you know, sir, that you have done your best to deprive me of my living?" continued the lecturer. The reporter was astounded, and answered "No." "You have," added Thackeray. "I make my living by delivering those lectures. If they are reported, no one will come to hear them, and I shall not be wanted." "That view of the matter never occurred to me," said the reporter, nervously. "I had no other object than to let the general public who could not hear the lectures know what they they were like." "No doubt," responded Thackeray, "but there are people who will be satisfied with your reports, and I shall be deprived of my just gains as a worker." Then the reporter, still anxious, if possible, to get a little of that praise which had not been forthcoming as far as the interview had proceeded, asked bluntly, "Was the report good as far as it went?" It must have been with mixed feelings that he heard the reply: "Confound it, sir, that is what I complain of. If the report had not been good, I should not have cared. The public would have seen that it was rubbish that I could not have written." The reporter, apparently mollified by the implied compliment, promised that as far as he was concerned, the lecturer's wishes should be respected in the future, adding that

though the editor would have to be consulted, there was no doubt that he, too, when acquainted with Thackeray's desire, would give instructions that the lectures were not to be further reported. The interview having reached this satisfactory point, the eminent novelist proceeded to invite the reporter's opinion on the lecture he had heard, and an amicable conversation followed. The reporter was Mr. Charles A. Cooper, now the editor of the *Scotsman*, and it is he who tells the story in his entertaining work, "An Editor's Retrospect."—(*Phonetic Journal*.)

### The condensed Report.

"The skilful condenser was never so much in demand as he is nowadays. He is by no means so abundant as newspaper editors and newspaper readers could wish, for though some capacity for reducing to moderate limits a narrative or report that given in full would monopolize several columns is a necessity to every journalist, the men who can accomplish the task to perfection are extremely few. Charles Reade once affirmed that there were in every great nation about three persons capable of condensing evidence without falsifying it, and he took the opportunity in his famous novel, "The Cloister and the Hearth," to show how entirely an unskilful condensation could misrepresent the effect of evidence given in court. For instance, the omission of the word "afterwards," which perhaps the note-taker thought redundant, made it appear that a statement with reference to the accused had been made at one time instead of subsequently. Then the mere fact of quoting an indignant answer made by a witness to an impertinent question, without quoting also the question, made the reply, which was quite natural in the circumstances, read like an impudent volunteered statement. Charles Reade never hesitated to make his stories into vehicles for advice or comment; and so he furnished in a footnote another illustration of the strange effect of a piece of inartistic condensation. A stage manager, who was a slave to the sound theatrical principle of "cutting," and who, therefore, snipped off every bit of dialogue that could be

dispensed with, once had the sentence, taken from "Rob Roy"—  
 "Rashleigh is my cousin: but for what reason I cannot define, he is  
 my bitterest enemy"—cut down to the statement, "Rashleigh is  
 my cousin: but for what reason I cannot define." This is possibly  
 an extreme case, though we have no doubt that parallel instances  
 could be found.

To condense well requires that the precise effect of a speech, or  
 of a debate, or of a witness's evidence, shall be given in a few words.  
 Every point of importance must be brought out in the condensed  
 report, and given, as far as possible, in the very words of the speaker.  
 The omissions are the mere verbiage, the superfluous illustrations,  
 the repetitions which the orator uses to drive home his argument in  
 the minds of his hearers, the intermediate remarks that serve to  
 lead them by easy stages from one "point" to another. The artistic  
 instinct has been described as the power to portray the essential  
 and to omit the irrelevant. This is what the reporter needs to ally  
 with his skill as a shorthand writer. The ability to seize the exact  
 words of every important passage in a speech, conjoined with the in-  
 tellectual readiness to detect the essential and present that to his  
 readers, make an indispensable part of the equipment of the modern  
 reporter. Public speakers do not always recognize the great service  
 that is rendered to them personally, as well as to the public, by the  
 able condenser. There are happy exceptions to this rule, but there  
 is room for a large increase in the number of exceptions. Good work  
 is too often taken quite as a matter of course.

A clever young reporter who attended a meeting on one of the  
 burning questions of the day, furnished a condensed report of the  
 speeches, which duly appeared in the local newspaper. In the fol-  
 lowing week he attended another meeting, convened by the political  
 party opposed to the views advocated at the previous gathering. To  
 his astonishment he heard one of the speakers in commencing his  
 speech say that he had attended the rival meeting a week before, and  
 had taken copious notes of the addresses in order to reply to them.

but that when he saw the report in the local paper he found that it gave everything so admirably that he at once threw his own notes into the fire. He may have been an able man in his own way, but he was not skilled in the art of taking down just those notes that were important and relevant, and he had the sagacity to recognize, and the honesty to acknowledge, the excellence of the work done by another. Perhaps he had taken his own notes under the disadvantage of an ignorance of shorthand. The commendation, however, was an encouragement to the reporter, one of those welcome signs that we all like to receive that our work does receive appreciation.

To condense well, a man needs a knowledge of the subject dealt with.—(*Phonetic Journal.*)

### Superior worth of a fully reported Speech over a condensed Speech.

Not long since an important speech was furnished verbatim by telegraph to a provincial morning paper, and to a London newspaper—that is to say, both had the same report. The sub-editors of the metropolitan journal reduced the speech, which was in the first person, to less than half the original length, being only able to devote a column and a half to it. The orator was criticised in the House of Lords by a speaker who had only read the condensed speech, but by referring to the fully-reported speech in the country daily, he was able to triumphantly refute his assailant.—(*Phonetic Journal.*)

### A baffled Search for a Quotation.

There have been discussions in print on the question—Are reporters irreligious? The reports of the debate in the Lords on the Irish Land Purchase Bill seem to indicate that reporters are not good churchgoers, and are not familiar with the English Prayer Book. The Duke of Argyll, as is well-known, is the author of a work on the “Reign of Law.” The closing part of his speech in the debate was an assertion of the reign of law in regard to the ownership of land.

With great solemnity he quoted a verse from a Psalm, in this form : "The Lord reigneth, be the people never so impatient." He continued by declaring that the people were impatient. Therefore the quotation became important in a full report of the speech. The report ~~re~~ did not recognize the last six words. Some of them got Cruden's Concordance and the Bible. "The Lord reigneth" was found more than once, but nothing about the impatience of the people. The 99th Psalm begins "The Lord reigneth, let the people tremble," but this would not fit in with the speech. Reporters from Scotland were asked—"Do you remember the quotation in any metrical version used in Scotland?" and they shook their heads. Someone said "Why, the Marquis of Lorne has written a metrical version of the Psalms ; perhaps the Duke was quoting from his son's version." None of these versions were at hand ; nothing more could be done. The reporters believed they had heard correctly because they were familiar with the words "The Lord reigneth." Still, it is so annoying to be found out in a misquotation that they would not run the risk, and so they acted on the rule "when in doubt leave it out," thus weakening an effective part of the speech. Those who were concerned or were spoken to thought of the Bible and the Concordance, the Scotch versions and the Marquis of Lorne's, but no one thought of the English Prayer Book. In that book the 99th Psalm, is headed "Dominus regnavit," and it begins "The Lord is King, be the people never so impatient." The Duke of Argyll, in reply to an inquiry, says that this was the verse he quoted ; and his Grace adds;—

"As a Scotsman, I am more familiar with the Bible version ; but, speaking in England, I thought the Prayer Book version would be the most familiar, and the sense given is the finer of the two."

His Grace's consideration for his audience was fatal to his being reported by the English reporters, in one of those telling passages that otherwise would have been reproduced. One would like to know how many peers besides the bishops recognized the quotation as being made from the Psalter—(*Phonetic Journal.*)

## **A lost historical comparison.**

In the Manipur debate in the Commons there was a striking omission from the fullest report of the speech of Sir Richard Temple. His speeches are models of method, composition and lucid expression, but, most unfortunately, his voice is so husky that much of what he says is lost, except to those very near him or to those who can look as well as listen. He made a comparison between the proposed arrest of the Senaputty in durbar and the arrest in 1567, in council, at Brussels, of Counts Egmont and Horn, by the infamous Duke of Alva. Those who were taking notes lost the comparison completely. Subsequent inquiries produced the suggestion from those who had read Motley's history that the reference must have been to Egmont and Horn. Still those who had not heard Sir R. Temple did not think at the moment of the exact point of the comparison, the arrest in council, and so the reporters completely ignored this allusion to a parallel case in European history. It was a most remarkable allusion, because the Duke of Alva was guilty of duplicity and treachery in this case, and Sir R. Temple would not believe that any treachery was intended at Manipur. When one adds illegal trials and wholesale executions to Alva's credit, the significance of this European precedent made the simple mention of it important, because so much was suggested by mere implication to those who were familiar with that period of history. It is possible that the defective reporting of the newspapers may be corrected by Sir R. Temple in revising his speech for Hansard; but, for the practical purpose of influencing present day opinion, this opportune citation of a European parallel is practically useless in Hansard\*

**REFLECTIONS AND MORALS.** Accidents like these are common in both Houses—perhaps more frequent in the Lords than the Commons. In the Lords only, a doubt can be cleared up or a newspaper omission supplied, a week afterwards, by reference to Hansard. The morals suggested are these :—

1. Reporters ought to be familiar with the Prayer Book as well as able to "Search the Scriptures" with the aid of Cruden's Concordance.

2. Reporters ought to be familiar with Motley's Dutch histories.

3. Reporters ought to be able to hear with certainty, so as to leave the responsibility for the report with the speakers.

4. As it is impossible to change Sir R. Temple's voice, or to make all speakers audible in the galleries, there ought to be a note taker in the Commons as favorably placed as Hausard's notetaker is in the Lord's ; and printed copies of the notes so taken ought to be immediately available for newspaper purposes.—(*Phonetic Journal.*)

## Amusing blunders caused by insertion of a wrong vowel.

The reporting style of most systems of shorthand consists principally of strings of consonants—the vowels being omitted to gain brevity and speed.

It is this absence of vowel representation that is responsible for so much misreading of shorthand notes. The American standing joke in illustration of this is made at the expense of a shorthand clerk, who was told by his wife to buy some Castile soap on his way home from office in the evening. He made a note of it in shorthand, but when the time came to make the purchase, misread it for "oxtail soup," which he took home to his wife, with what result let the reader imagine.

The insertion of a wrong vowel, too, is often responsible for an amusing blunder. A capital story is told of a shorthand clerk, who wanted his boy entered in a certain school where shorthand was taught. Knowing that the schoolmaster would be able to decipher

it, the father, to save time, wrote the message in shorthand. He meant to say :—

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I have decided to enter my boy in your school.”

What he really did say was—

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I have decided to *inter* by boy in your *scull*.”

Fancy the astonishment of the pedagogue at such a proposal.

Perhaps, however, the most comical errors arise when the newly-engaged clerk is for a time ignorant of the meaning of the technical terms employed in his master's calling. One day, for instance, a lawyer dictated a special writ of *feri facias* to his shorthand clerk, and, being in a hurry, rushed off to the Court with the transcript as soon as it was made, without reading it. When it was presented, the dignified judge glanced through it, looked at a certain part of it steadily, and became convulsed with laughter. He then handed the paper back to the lawyer, stating he was sorry he couldn't grant his petition.

“ I think, please the Court, that this is according to rule,” persisted the attorney.

“ Well, this court is unable to do anything for you,” replied the judge. “ Your request is unreasonable ; just take your petition and read it.”

The lawyer did so, and found that it requested the Court to grant “ special red fiery faces” to its petitioners.

In justice, however, to the great body of competent shorthand clerks, it must be remembered that mistakes, specially of the unac-



countably stupid kind, are generally made by those who know but a smattering of shorthand, and who only bring discredit upon their brethren of the quill by offering themselves for situations before they have thoroughly mastered the elements of their art. (H. Thomson F. Sh. S. *The Humorous side of shorthand and Reporting* )

## The reporting profession is by no means a bed of roses

Although the emoluments of individual practitioners are often considerable. The work is arduous, but is occasionally relieved by bright flashes of humour not infrequently enjoyed at the expense of the "representatives of the press." To be just to reporters, however, it is not always they who blunder. The speakers themselves are often the victims of their own mistake. For instance, an unthinking orator may easily excite the risible faculties when using a word having a double application. Indeed, he may hardly be aware of his own mistake until it is too late to be rectified and the laugh is turned against him.

A political candidate, not long since, intimated from the platform that he would visit the families residing in a certain district, *embracing* even the maidservants. Not less curious, too, are the mistakes made by speakers through inattention to the drift of the language employed. For instance, it is reported that an Irish critic once said : "Shakespeare has not only shown human nature as it is, but as it would be in *situations to which it cannot be exposed.*" The reader may guess, too, in which portion of the United Kingdom it was that a parson made the astounding remark that "little children who could neither speak nor walk could be seen running about the streets cursing and swearing."

However, it must be confessed that the majority of amusing errors connected with reporting are made by reporters themselves. Chief among them are the mistakes made through ignorance on the part of the note-taker.

The desirability of a fair Biblical knowledge on the part of the reporter was somewhat curiously exemplified in the report of a speech delivered in connection with a certain moral reform. The chairman took occasion to quote the well-known passage, "If any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed." *The Brighton Examiner* the next morning represented him as saying, "If any man suffer for a question let him not be ashamed."

These are the mistakes of ignorance ; sometimes however, errors are made by reporters owing to imperfect hearing, caused not unfrequently by the bad articulation of the speakers they are reporting. The fact is, there are some speakers who cultivate such a melodramatic habit of suddenly raising and as suddenly lowering their voices—at one moment shouting and at the next whispering—that it is really wonderful that they ever do get reported correctly.

To imperfect hearing may be ascribed the substitution of "breaking of heads in the vestry" for "breaking of bread in the vestry," and of "ride a Greek goat," for "write a Greek ode." Absurd as such mistakes appear, they often serve the purpose of enlivening speeches which might otherwise be dull reading.

But we must not suppose that reporters are responsible for all the curious blunders one meets with in the public press. Sometimes the clerk who telegraphs the speech to the newspaper office is to blame. In illustration of this, an error of a peculiar character occurred in the description given by the *Daily News* of a speech of Mr. Gladstone's delivered at Manchester. "Mr. Gladstone incidentally mentioned the near approach of his eightieth birthday, when the vast audience, leaping suddenly to their feet, burst into ringing cheers." The effect of this on Mr. Gladstone is thus described:—He "was evidently deeply touched by this spontaneous outburst of almost personal affection. He stood with his hands folded, head bent down, and *legs quivering*." The startling

feat in the last clause is supposed to have originated with the telegraph clerk, the written sentence having described Mr. Gladstone with his "lips quivering."

Before taking our leave of this part of our subject, the following story may be related as illustrating what, happily, seldom occurs in the newspaper world. The Bishop of Manchester was once announced to preach in a manufacturing town in South-East Lancashire, and, as is usually the case, the local papers instructed their representatives to take a full report. The people of the district were greatly astonished the following Saturday, however, to find that whilst one of the organs of the locality gave a sermon on Samuel, as emanating from the learned divine, the other gave an entirely different discourse about Peter. It appears that one of the reporters, by some error, visited the wrong church, and took down the sermon of a curate, under the impression that he was the Bishop of Manchester.—(*Ibid.*)

### **Newspaper readers, should estimate at their true worth stereotyped phrases used by reporters.**

It is often a source of amusement to the diligent newspaper reader to ponder over those stereotyped phrases so dear to reporters, and to estimate them at their true worth. Who has not been amused, for instance, at the information rather grudgingly vouchsafed to us when the guardians of law and order are prosecuting their inquiries after the commission of a terrible crime. "The police are in possession of an important clue, but are very reticent on the subject." What does the "important clue" turn out to be in nine cases out of ten? Moonshine.

Then there is the untrustworthy, untruthful reporter, who always begins his articles "We are well informed." When the energetic driver of the quill relies on a mere rumour, he writes, "We learn from a perfectly reliable source."

When he is uncertain he says, "As is well-known." If he has written all that can be written on a subject, he adds, "We might continue this subject for columns." This, by the way, is on a par with the crushing reply of the editor of the weekly periodical to the unlucky subscriber who ventures to forward a tormentingly hard question, "We really cannot take up space by answering such ridiculously easy questions."

Then again there is the reporter who, if he does not hear anything at all, writes, "It has come to our ears." If he does not know how an affair started, he writes, "As all our readers are aware."

And lastly, if nobody has said a word to him on a subject, he says, "We have just been assured."

These and many similar phrases, the experienced reader looks with suspicions, or at any rate learns to digest them with the proverbial large grain of salt.—(*Ibid.*)

## Reporting surreptitiously the deliberations of a jury.

Journalism in the United States, at any rate, is not without its perils, as is shown by the fate of Mr. Choate, a reporter on the staff of that widely renowned paper, the *New York World*. This enterprising gentleman contrived to conceal himself in the private conference room of the jury in the Fluck trial, and in this position managed to take surreptitious notes of their deliberations, for which flagrant contempt of Court he was indicted by the grand jury and sentenced to the penitentiary.—(*Ibid.*)

## Smart American Reporting.

A tale of a far different character is the following, meant to illustrate "American smartness." The crack reporter of a Brooklyn evening paper, so the story runs, lately displayed an enterprise and

a resource rare even in American journalism. If the story itself is not a product of American humour, this reporter, sent by an early train to Trainfield, New Jersey, to witness an execution that morning, on arrival found that the criminal was not to be hanged till mid-day, an arrangement altogether incompatible with the despatch of his report in time for insertion in his paper, issued at 2 p.m.

He, therefore, hurried off to the sheriff, and after pointing out that he should be a loser of ten dollars if the man under sentence was not hanged before twelve o'clock, implored that official to give orders that the "ceremony" should take place an hour earlier. At first the sheriff flatly, and with some indignation, refused, but the reporter at last coaxed him into promising that he would authorise the hour if the person chiefly concerned could be induced to consent thereto.

The reporter was then admitted without delay to the condemned cell, where he briefly explained his wishes to its occupant. Drinks were freely partaken of, and the reporter made himself so agreeable that presently the doomed man volunteered the statement that "he did not mind being hanged an hour before his time to oblige so pleasant a fellow." This magnanimous offer was forthwith notified to the sheriff, who gave the necessary directions; and the man was hanged at eleven instead of twelve, thereby enabling the Brooklyn reporter to get off a full, true, and particular account of the execution to his paper in time for the two o'clock issue.—(*Ibid.*)

### **A pushing and unquenchable envoy of the press.**

The recently published "Further Recollections of Mr. T. A. Trollope," however, contains a story of American journalism, which for once is amusing without being in the least offensive, or distinguished by coarse humour. On the contrary, the story illustrates a legitimate action of the pushing and unquenchable envoy of the press, in which various characteristics of our smart cousins are agree-

ably manifest. The allocution of Pope Pius IX., on conferring the cardinal's hat upon Monsignor McClosky, was of course of the highest interest to Roman Catholics in America, and a correspondent of one of the New York papers, then in Rome, burned with desire to obtain and telegraph it to his paper before its publication to the general world. He hurried accordingly to an American priest of high position—"one of the domestic prelates of His Holiness"—and requested him to procure at once a copy of the document in question. The American prelate declared it impossible, as the much-coveted allocution, though printed, was not to be issued for a day or two. "I must have a copy to-day," said the correspondent, "and you must get me one." After some altercation concluded by the journalist with a threat of gaining admission to the Pope himself, and "managing enough Italian to make the old boy understand what I want," Monsignor, fearing a scandal, at last reluctantly consented to try.

"Telegraph my allocution," said the Pope when he heard the American cleric's hesitating request, submitted with all sorts of excuses and apologies for the ignorance of his countryman of the ways and etiquette of Courts. "Telegraph my allocution! Does he know how long it is, and what it will cost?"

"Oh! that, your Holiness, is a matter of no consideration; perhaps a few thousand francs. Our people are so anxious for the words your Holiness has graciously spoken on this occasion that the cost of five or six thousand francs or so is of no consequence."

Pius was immensely flattered, and as pleased as possible. He got up, trotted across the room to a large desk, and taking from it a printed copy of the desired document, said: "Not another copy will go out before to-morrow; but take this to your friend and let him telegraph it at once. Five thousand francs! I rejoice that our words are too highly valued by your people."

The prelate's part of the business, however, was not yet over.

When he triumphantly brought the copy of the speech to his young friend the reporter, the latter, taking it from him, said : " All right. But this is Latin. I must translate it in English. I'll tell you what it is, Dr. C—, you have got to come with me to the office, and translate it while I copy it for the wire." And that was the way the learned divine spent the greater part of the night. Fancy an English newspaper correspondent sending a bishop upon his errands, and keeping him up all night translating a despatch.—(*Ibid.*)

### **Reporters stealing a march upon each other.**

Many are the dodges resorted to by "gentlemen of the press" to steal a march upon each other when urgency is a matter of vital importance. In the year 1889, as the Lord Mayor's Show passed down Cheapside, there came a rumour into the thoroughfare that another murder had been committed in Whitechapel. The rumour travelled down the street, and reached a point at which stood six reporters. For a moment they opened their eyes wide with astonishment ; then they pushed their way out of the throng, and ran for dear life in search of hansom cabs to take them towards Aldgate. Now each of these young fellows determined that his own particular paper should get the information at the earliest moment, and each meant to "do" the other. But one of them was sharper than his fellows. It occurred to him that, even if he got the details of the murder, the telegraph wire might be engaged, and he would be baffled. Then a good idea came to him. He rushed to the nearest post office, and saying that he had a very long message to send, gave the clerk the first instalment promising to bring the remainder in later. His first instalment consisted of seven of the Psalms. Having given the operator enough work to occupy him for half-an-hour, and secured the wire, he strolled leisurely out into Whitechapel, and surveyed the scene. The other reporters chuckled, thinking that he was slow ; but the laugh was on his side when he returned to the post office, and found them grumbling away at the clerk, who could not send their messages owing to the pressure caused by the delivery of the seven Psalms. Then, again, there is a story

told by one of the war correspondents, who was hurrying to England before the days of wires, and who got to Boulogne and thought he had so far outstripped his fellows that he might rest an hour before getting abroad. He entered the nearest hotel, when, to his horror, a rival drove up after him. But a stratagem was his immediate resort; and with an uneasy mind he ordered lunch in so loud a voice that the other fellow heard him, and thought that he, too, might stop and have lunch. But the correspondent had no intention of lunching, and only stayed to pretend that he must go upstairs and wash his hands. Leaving the room boldly, he slipped out of the back door, and ordered a special boat to bring him over. On the principle that "everything is fair in love and war," reporters occasionally stoop to very shady tricks to out-do each other. Those on board a certain Press steamer a few years ago, on the occasion of a University boat race, must have unconsciously witnessed a very funny "scoop." A reporter wrote the account of each stage of the race, put these accounts in bottles and dropped them overboard to men in small boats, who were awaiting them. But another idle rogue had got wind of this intention, and with confederates he too waited in the river, and as the journalist dropped his bottles, these fellows seized them, and made off with the news.

During some of the great riots years ago, two newspaper reporters, in their eagerness to get news, entered the very thick of the fight and when the soldiers charged the mob and fired upon them, those fellows laid down and were almost killed. But the charge passed, and rising to their feet the writers had to devise how they were to outwit each other. "How am I to get to the telegraph office?" was the question each asked himself. Just then a detachment of police swept by, and one of the reporters hurried up to the sergeant and whispered something in his ear. The man looked, nodded, and promptly proceeded to run the other fellow in. The rascal of a friend of his had hinted to the police sergeant that his friend was a ringleader of the mob, and had better be cared for. So the poor fellow was run in, while the informer sauntered off to make a splendid sensation with his copy.



The following story, too, of a reporter's device is too good to be omitted. A quick witted reporter on the staff of *La Presse*, a French paper, was requested to furnish a report of Béranger's funeral. The paper appeared at four in the afternoon. 'The reporter followed the splendid procession step by step from the home of the deceased to the graveside, jotting down the most minute details, the names of the persons in attendance, the pallbearers, the speeches delivered at the grave, etc. The time went on, and as the hour for going to press drew nearer, Braschet (for that was our pressman's name) consulted his watch with feverish anxiety, waiting until the last minute before delivering his copy to the typesetters. At last the speeches were over, and the first shovelful of earth was dropped on the coffin lid. Braschet, with frantic exertion, elbowed his way through the crowd of soldiers and other bystanders, and ran at full speed to the gates of Père La Chaise, which, to his horror, he found close, and guarded by a strong body of infantry. No passing in and out allowed until further orders. Entreaties, protests, attempts at bribery proved of no avail. What was to be done? The copy would fail to arrive in time—a sufficient disgrace to drive the reporter to commit suicide; but the man was not so easily daunted. While looking out for some other outlet, however small, our prisoner saw the hearse slowly coming down the avenue leading to the gates. Quietly slipping round, he jumped on behind, and crept under the pall in the place intended for the corpse. As the vehicle approached, the ranks divided, the gates were thrown open, and the hearse passed out.

Braschet breathes again—he is free! Quickly throwing aside the black drapery under which he lay concealed, he leaped to the ground, to the great consternation of the passers-by and the undertaker's men. He then jumped into a cab, and shouted to the driver, "Ten francs if you drive me sharp to 121, Rue Montmartre!"—(*Ibid.*)

## Sensational reporting with a vengeance.

A story, throwing a side light of a strange character on the work of reporters, will fitly conclude these illustrations of reporting humour. It concerns our Gallic neighbours across the "silvery streak." Reporting the Paris police-courts is a speciality for which every journalist is not fitted, as the French public demand in the public reporter both dramatic and comic powers ; his reports of crimes must be sensational, and his account of minor offences either humorous or sentimental. It is, therefore, a matter of considerable importance for a French newspaper to choose a police-court representative. A Paris paper, where there was a vacancy, dropped on a very promising young man. His first article was quite a success. Here, in brief, is his first case: An old woman, calling herself Marguérite, was brought before the correctional tribunal charged with vagrancy. She had given herself up to the police, stating that she had no resources. The proceedings went on in the usual commonplace way ; the aged Marguérite was examined, she admitted the offence, the policeman and witnesses were heard, and the Court deliberated. As the sentence was about to be delivered, a young workman entered the Court, and uttered the cry, " Ah ! my mother ! " The deliberation of the Court was interrupted, and the public visibly moved, while the young man, rushing forward, clasped his aged parent in his arms, exclaiming, " My mother ! at length I find you ; I have been looking for you these three days."

All was explained. The poor woman, unwilling to be a burden to her poor son, had caused herself to be arrested in order to secure board and lodging gratis. Acquittal ; freedom ; curtain. But this was not the end of the romantic incident. The young journalist's story was reproduced in several papers beside his own ; subscriptions were opened and were liberally responded to in favour of the self-sacrificing and venerable mother. The sentiment and charity of all classes of society were appealed to most successfully, and the relief fund for old Marguérite was a big success. The difficulty now was how to place the money in the hands of the deserving object of the

subscriptions, for she, her son and the whole case were unknown at the Palais de Justice.

The young reporter, who was busy with other matters, and who knew nothing of the effect produced by his first article, was sent for by his editor and asked to give further and necessary particulars of Marguérite's case. Of course he had none to give, and he confessed at once that he had drawn on his imagination for his facts. The editor fainted. When he came to, he decided that it was not necessary to let the public into the secret, and the alms were distributed to various charitable institutions, and silence encouraged to grow over the whole affair. It was further decided that the reporter's salary should be raised twenty-five per cent. ; but he was made to swear solemnly that henceforth his reports should be scrupulously true.—(*Ibid.*)

## THE DUTY OF THE STENOGRAPHER AS A SPEECH REPORTER.\*

BY M. ALPHONSE DESJARDINS, OF THE OFFICIAL PARLIAMENTARY  
REPORTORIAL CORPS, HOUSE OF COMMONS, OTTAWA.

### **An homage to reporters and shorthand reporting.**

In his opening address at the London Shorthand Congress, 1887, Lord Roseberry, now one of the leading members of the Gladstone Cabinet, delivered the following sentence: "I pay homage in that spirit to your title and noble art, which has added largely to the power and economy of the present day, and is likely to add to them indefinitely in the future ; and I pay homage to it further, for this reason ; that, in the past, it has recorded the speeches of a Cicero and a Cæsar ; and I think in the coming days historians will not be

\* Proceedings of the New York State Stenographers' Association, including Papers Read, etc., at the Eighteenth Annual Meeting held at Niagara Falls, August 24 and 25, 1893.

ungrateful to it for having recorded the speeches of a Gladstone, a Disraeli, and a Bright."

This language of the learned and noble lord proves conclusively in what high esteem and honor he holds the art of Stenography. That esteem and honor have their foundation in a parliamentary experience extending over many years, and on the usefulness of the art,—nay, on the very fact that it is an indispensable complement of parliamentary government. Those words may also be taken as a fitting appreciation, in the opinion of the noble lord, of the manner in which shorthand writers discharge their duties toward public men, and insure for them an everlasting memory for their deeds, and of the reasons that prompt them in dealing with matters connected with the people's welfare.

An art that has such an importance, and is susceptible of an application of the highest order, cannot be trifled with or looked upon as of small interest. On the contrary, it has conquered, even from the time of the great Roman orator, a footing of no secondary importance, and students of history cannot overestimate what they owe to the practice of stenography; for who can tell what is due to Tiron, the shorthand writer of Cicero, and his pupils? If that art has such a capital importance, nothing that is connected with it can be regarded as of small moment, certainly when the subject touches the highest application of stenography, namely, speech reporting. It was for me no matter for surprise to find in the reported proceedings of the New York State Stenographers' Association, for the last two annual meetings and before, a somewhat lengthy discussion of what is to be considered the duty of the stenographer in transcribing his notes of a speech, or, in other words, whether he shall deem it his duty to revise or correct the phraseology used by the speaker, or produce it *ad literam*. I always thought this a most important subject; for it involves the whole fabric of speech reporting, and upon the solution given to the question depends, in my opinion, the good or ill appreciation of the outside public of our work; nay, still, more, even of our usefulness.

## **“Verbatim,” “verbatim report” and “an edited or corrected report” explained.**

A few words before proceeding any further, on the relative meaning of the words “verbatim” and “verbatim report.” It must be clearly understood that when I refer to the shorthand notes, I shall mean that those notes are *taken* verbatim; that is to say, that all the words of the speaker are taken down as they should be. And when I shall mention “verbatim report,” that will mean the literal transcription of shorthand notes, as it is done in cases where a witness gives his evidence in a court of law, where, for obviously good reasons, every word has to be noted and transcribed. On the other hand, I strongly repudiate any thing that will tend to convey the idea that the words, “an edited or corrected report” of a speech does not mean a *verbatim* report, as it is universally admitted to be, amongst professional shorthand writers. In such matters, the least misunderstanding may lead to very wrong conclusions and false judgment. An *edited* report, in my mind, is as much a *verbatim* report as it can and should be, made on *ad litteram verbatim* notes of the stenographer.

## **The revisionary duty of the shorthand reporter.**

In his treatise read before this Association at its sixteenth annual meeting, held in 1891, Dr. Zeibig, in a very exhaustive paper on shorthand, mentions, only *en passant*, the subject of the revisionary duty of the stenographer, or the discretion supposed to be left in the hands of the practitioner in making his transcription. Of course it must be clearly understood, before going any farther, that what follows applies solely to a report of a speech, whether delivered on the floor of Parliament or Congress, or on the public platform, in the pulpit, or as a public lecture. It cannot be a question having application to any of those cases in which a truly and essentially verbatim transcription is required, as, for instance, in the proceedings of the law courts—the taking down of evidence. In those cases there cannot be any discretionary power, of any sort what-

ever ; for if a witness happens to miss the proper expression to answer the question put to him, he has many opportunities of correcting himself ; the lawyer on either side hastening to give him that opportunity, or even requiring him to explain what would seem more or less obscure or doubtful ; but the same advantage is not given to the public speaker ;—*he* must go on by all means, whether or not he feels the lack of appropriateness of his phraseology ; having the sole opportunity of making good what is deficient by coming back on the same subject and repeating his views if he thinks his former expressions were inadequate to his thought.

### **“ A true photograph of the speech.”**

I regret that so eminent a stenographer as Professor Zeibig has not dwelt in a more exhaustive manner on the subject referred to, as he, no doubt, would have thrown a good deal of light on it. However, we have his deliberate opinion on the matter ; and that is to the effect, that the duty of a stenographer consists in reproducing as faithfully as possible the very words of the speaker ; to make, in other terms, a true photograph of the speech. I shall hereafter refer to Dr. Zeibig's opinion. On the other hand, he admits that there is a large class of eminent shorthand writers who take exception to that opinion, and profess entirely different views about what is or what should be the duty of a stenographer acting as a speech reporter. He gives the opinion of Mr. Prévost, a French shorthand writer of long and practical experience, who thinks that the stenographer “who comprehends his mission in its highest sense, could not bestow too much care on that part of it” which consists in correcting the phraseology of the speaker, above all, of the real extemporizer, without in any way interfering with the individual peculiarities of each speaker. Mr. Delpino, an Italian stenographer, holds the same view as Dr. Ziebig, and thinks that the photograph plan should prevail. According to Dr. Ziebig, this is the opinion entertained by the German stenographers ; for he adds : “We in Germany are convinced that the embellishment of speeches, in the matter of form, cannot and should not be the province of a stenographer.”

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It must be conceded that too much care and attention can not be bestowed on the subject ; for it has a far greater importance than one would be disposed to grant it at first sight. From a reporter's point of view, it is not of small consequence that his work should be fully and highly appreciated by both sides ; that is, by the speech-makers and by those who read the speeches saved from oblivion by his skilful hand. As Mr. George R. Bishop, your worthy President, puts it, for the shorthand writer who wishes to save his reputation for accuracy, this side of the question is of vastly greater moment than can be imagined without serious consideration.

### **Historical aspect of reporting.**

In an historical aspect, too, it can hardly be overestimated ; for nothing is to be neglected to insure the utmost faithfulness when history is the objective. And when we reflect on the great expansion of democracy or popular government—for both are synonymous—since the beginning of the present century,—which means that almost every public act is the object of an open deliberation by the representatives of that democracy, where speeches by hundreds are delivered either to those representatives assembled or their direct and constitutional masters, the electors, and that the stenographers intervene to take those speeches down and have them in record for future reference and consideration,—it seems impossible to give the subject such notice as its importance would justify. If the above point is conceded, then how can one trifle with the question, when the good reputation and almost the whole character of a public man is at stake ? for a senseless report of a man's speeches might make him appear in quite a different light from that in which he ought to appear, and mislead the historian who has to weigh the arguments to arrive at a just conclusion on the motives of a public man's deed, or to pass judgment on the work of his whole life. Of course, I do not mean to say that the speeches of a public man are the only basis upon which the historian must ground his judgment ; but undoubted-

ly it must be admitted, on the other hand, that future history will very largely avail itself—as historians have already availed themselves—of such a rich mass of information; hence, upon the correctness or incorrectness of the record, might depend the good or bad appreciation of future generations of the lifework of many a public servant. It is not to be wondered at if the particular question of the duty of the stenographer in transcribing his notes has already occupied, and will in the present as well as in the future—until it is definitely settled—occupy much of the attention of the parliamentary practitioners. I say, parliamentary practitioners; for upon them devolves the greater part of the burden of what may be termed the *historical* reporting, or reporting<sup>a</sup> which will be left to make history. Already, as above stated, such eminent men as Dr. Zeibig, of Dresden, Mr. Prevost, of Paris, and Mr. Delpino, of the Italian Official Corps of Stenographers, have expressly considered the subject, and have given their opinion.

### **A verbatim report is a horrible thing.**

Mr. Charles Ross, superintendent of the reporting arrangements of the London “Times” for twenty-five years was examined before the Select Committee on Parliamentary Reporting in July 1878 :—

“Is it your opinion that members are, as a rule, rather grateful to reporters for sometimes putting their language in a little better order than that in which it was delivered?—Owing to the nature of the manner in which the reports are carried on now, that is not done as well as it should be; but in some instances I should think they are very glad to have a *report*,—instead of what is called a verbatim report, which is a horrible thing.”

In another answer he went much farther—too far, as many favourable to his general view might consider. In speaking of the “Times” giving shorter reports of the speeches, he said: “\* \* \* the members would be better served if they had their opinion given.



The words are immaterial—except, perhaps, in a few cases; I beg pardon, I am thinking of such men as Canning and Plunkett: *there* it was material; their language was so beautiful.”

“I suppose there are a few members in the House of Commons whose speeches you profess to report verbatim in the ‘Times?’—No; not verbatim, I hope; I do not think there is any one who is reported verbatim. You see a speech done at great length, and you are not conscious of any little alteration—improvements in the language or the construction of a sentence; it should be done, and I trust it is done; that is the reporter’s duty.

“What kind of reporting do you call that?—I call that full reporting; accurate reporting. Verbatim reporting the speaker would think far from accurate.”

“I was simply wishing to know how you characterize the fullest reports of the speeches of any members?—A *full* report. Verbatim reporting has never been known in a newspaper.

“Literally verbatim reporting you mean?—Yes.” And here it must be born in mind that “Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates” are mostly made up with the reports of the very same newspapers’ report, and are considered, in England as well as elsewhere, as accurate reports as can be had; they do not bear the official stamp, but nobody thinks of denying them the same authority as if they were official, and they are quoted the world over.

In another answer, Mr. Ross explained his views by giving some reasons. He said:

“I object to parliamentary reporting now as being too full, as giving much that might be omitted, and omitted with advantage to the speakers; I would give all the arguments of the speaker, and his opinions. You must be aware that a speaker must necessarily go on speaking; that he cannot stop; he must say the same thing not only twice, but sometimes three or four times; that does not add

to the strength of the argument when you come to read it ; it may impress it upon the mind of the hearers, and that is the excuse that is made for the iteration of counsel ; but when you have it in print to refer to, you do not want all those repetitions.

“It is the individual reporter who, in point of fact, edits, if I may so speak, the speech which he reports?—Yes; he is responsible for that.

“Does that involve the possession of considerable education, as well as of talent, on the part of the reporter?—It does.

“But is it not the case that shorthand writing, as a mechanical art, may be learned mechanically by any person who can read and write?—Yes.

But *reporting*, whether in shorthand or in longhand, is a totally different thing?—Quite different.”

Although I shall, later on, touch that point, I may be permitted to draw attention to the fact that in the above answers Mr. Ross declares that the *editing* duty of a parliamentary reporter or shorthand writer, involves the possession of considerable education as well as of talent on his part. That is why in every country, where there is an official reporting bureau for the recording of the debates of Parliament, it has been found necessary to require high educational qualifications from those forming part of such a bureau.

## **A report should not be slavishly verbatim.**

Mr. John Lovell, a man of considerable and practical experience as manager of the Press Association for ten years, was, of course, examined by the committee ; and what is, according to that gentleman, a “*verbatim*” report of a speech ? Here is what he said on the particular point we are now examining :—

“But is your idea of an historical record; that it is to be a *verbatim* report, or, at any rate, what has been described as a *full*

report ?—I think it should be a verbatim report ; I do not see any other cause.

“ Leaving out the repetitions ?—Yes ; of course it should not be slavishly verbatim.”

Mr. William Saunders, manager of the “ Central News,” and formerly proprietor of the “ Central Press,” being examined, said :—

“ How far would the official report that you contemplate, be in the nature of a verbatim report, or an edited report ?—It would be a verbatim report, with the exception of obvious repetitions, and such matter as could be obviously omitted without detriment to the report.”

Mr. William Henry Gurney-Salter, of the firm of Messrs. Gurney, shorthand writers to the British Parliament for a great many years, testified as follows as to what is, in his opinion, a *verbatim* report of a speech, and what is the duty of an intelligent shorthand writer in transcribing his notes :—

“ That it should be a verbatim report, you mean ?—However the report might afterward be revised or abridged throughout or in particular parts, I think the basis should be a verbatim report, subject to the corrections of any grammatical errors, or any such slips as most speakers occasionally fall into. Sometimes a speaker adds to a sentence, by way of an afterthought, a clause which obviously should be introduced at an earlier stage ;—an intelligent shorthand writer would correct that when it was copied out.”

**Familiarity with public questions, in addition to high educational attainments, is an essential qualification for a reporter.**

So much for the inquiry held in 1878. In 1880, the House of Lords appointed a select committee to complete the inquiry made in

1878, and amongst others, Mr. Gurney-Salter, who had appeared before the preceding committee, completed his first testimony on the particular point I have in view, by the following words, which have a great bearing on the question I now discuss. Asked if there was any thing else which he would wish to add with reference to the necessary qualification of a shorthand writing staff, he answered :—

“I think it will be evident that, considering the great importance of the subject-matter to be reported, and also the extreme importance of having an official or even a semi-official record perfectly accurate, so that the words spoken may be quoted with safety at a future time, the highest shorthand writing qualifications should be brought into the service of the report, and that for that purpose not only technical skill, that is, to say, rapidity and accuracy of shorthand writing (which are qualifications by no means so common as is often supposed—very much the contrary), but also familiarity with public questions, and indeed general education, a university education if possible—should be possessed by the shorthand writer. It is evident, too, that it would be a work of very great responsibility. A shorthand writer in such a position must be a man who will not be negligent, and who will not be induced from any cause to depart from his strict duty. There must be no inaccuracy, either by accident or design, in his report.”

If the stenographer is supposed to do only mechanical work—if he is only what Dr. Zeibig says, a man who makes a photograph, why, then, exact such qualifications of the highest possible order, as “familiarity with public questions, and indeed general education—a university education?” That indicates very clearly, to my mind, that Mr. Gurney-Salter is strongly of opinion that the shorthand writer must be in a position to do *editing* work, and, moreover, that it is by no means one of the less important parts of his duty, for those high qualifications are much more often required to be used than is generally believed.

## Mr. Hansard's distinction of "a full report" and "a verbatim report."

In 1888, general complaints having again been heard about "*Hansard*," both houses appointed another committee to inquire into the publishing of the "Debates" of the Imperial Parliament. The committee called upon the practical shorthand writers of the London and Provincial Press. Of course Mr. Hansard was called upon to give his evidence, as he had had a long experience in the matter, not so much as a working hand, in the strictest sense of the word, but as a gentleman having had a long intercourse with members of both branches of Parliament about speech reporting, and consequently being in a position to know what does or does not satisfy them, or would or would not satisfy those public speakers. Here is something interesting :

"Would you explain to the committee what you do propose?—Most people know what a full report is ; it is different from a verbatim report. Many honorable members would be very much astonished if they saw a verbatim report of what they had said the night before.

"BY MR. LABOUCHERE—In this plan that you propose, would your shorthand writer take down every word the speaker says, and then, in writing it out, put it into a little better English ; or, would he himself put it into better English, or reduce it to a certain extent, while the speaker is speaking?—I think not whilst the speaker is speaking ; I do not think it is possible.

"Would the shorthand writer literally report every word?—He would if he wanted it.

"But there is no such thing done?—There is no such thing either in the United States, or in France, or in Italy, or anywhere.

"I may take it as your opinion that an actually verbatim report is very seldom obtained?—It is very seldom obtained ; and I should

say, except in the case of a very great speaker, like Mr. Gladstone, that it was not desirable." And as publisher for a great many years of the "Debates," Mr. Hansard is considered to possess a vast knowledge of all that is connected with shorthand in so far as that especial kind of reporting is concerned.

## **A good reporter should know how to edit the speech he reports.**

Mr. William Leycester, head of the reporting staff of "The Times," and, as such, director of all the operations in connection with their reports, said what follows, Earl Spencer putting the questions :

"In your ordinary report you correct, I suppose, any slips of grammar ?—Yes; a good reporter ought to be an editor, more or less.

"It would be very grotesque, indeed, if the actual words were given ?—The effect would be singular in some cases; I would rather not say 'grotesque.'

"As to the reports to which many of us subscribe, and which are issued every week by 'The Times,'—are those verbatim, as they appear in 'The Times?'—With the necessary corrections.

"What sort of corrections do you refer to?—Verbal corrections; obvious blunders.

"Do you mean corrections made by the speaker, or whoever edits the speech in 'The Times' office?—Made by the editor, and also, if any speaker writes to us to correct our report, we insert his correction.

"And there are omissions, are there not, of words which were actually spoken in the debate;—are they omitted in the weekly report?—No; there is no alteration of the reports as they appeared in 'The Times,' except that they are corrected."

Further in his testimony, Mr. Leycester came again on the same point, and emphasized more clearly his opinion about the necessity for the stenographer to look to the grammatical correction of the speeches. He said :

“ You say that ‘ The Times ’ does not give a verbatim report ; I suppose there is hardly any instance in which any lengthy speech, from any one, is absolutely verbatim. Sometimes a speaker begins a sentence, then he harks back and begins it again ?—Yes ; a good reporter, as I say, ought to be a good editor. [Take Mr. Gladstone, who is supposed to be the most fluent of speakers ; I suppose even his speech requires a little editing ?—A very little ; but a little now and then.]

“ I suppose that all the editing Mr. Gladstone would require would be leaving out, ‘ Well, now,’ and things of that sort ?—Yes ; and a little redundancy now and then to be pruned.

“ We know that Mr. Gladstone’s sentences are sometimes involved ; but do not his sentences always come out perfectly clear ?—Yes ; he always finishes his sentences.

“ So that, practically, Mr. Gladstone’s speeches, to all intents and purposes, could be reported as they are spoken, with the exception of such words as ‘ Well, now ? ’—Yes.

“ The same observations would apply, would they not, to such speeches as Mr. Bright used to deliver ?—Yes, even more.”

I have reproduced here the last three answers in order to show how necessary is the editing process, when one considers that out of so numerous a Parliament,—both houses containing over 1,000 members, composed of the higher social and educated class of the United Kingdom,—there were, in 1888, in the judgment of Mr. Leycester, and of the members generally of the committee, but two gentlemen that could be reported verbatim, with, however, the exception of “ a little editing.” Now, how much more editing must be required in other countries where the democracy is all powerful ?

## A "full report" and a "verbatim report" [differentiated.]

Mr. Leycester says further, in his evidence : "A full report does not, of course, mean a verbatim report ?—There is not much difference. I do not like the word 'verbatim ;' but when I say a *full* report, I mean as full as it would be proper to report anybody.

"By 'verbatim' you mean the inclusion of all errors ?—Yes ; and repetitions, and diffuseness."

In another part of his evidence, he explains more clearly what he means by a "full" report :—

"A full report would not be a verbatim report ?—It would be nearly verbatim. I say I do not like the word 'verbatim ;' but a full report would be a verbatim report to all intents and purposes, leaving out that which a man would leave out himself if he were correcting his own speech.

"Leaving out 'Well, now,' and such expressions as that ?—Yes ; and mere repetitions.

"But, practically, for a full report, you would retain everything that anybody (himself) would retain in his speech ?—Yes ; as full a report as anybody would care to have.

"A 'full' report is a rational verbatim report ?—Yes."

## The duty of a reporter in transcribing his shorthand notes.

Mr. William Henry Gurney-Salter, before the committee in 1888, gave lengthy evidence. In connection with what should be and is the duty of the shorthand writer in transcribing a speech, he again repeated his former opinion, but took advantage to give a little more explanation on what, for him, the word "verbatim" means ; and it clearly appears that both he and Mr. Leycester are of the same mind on the subject :



“Do you think if an official reporter were employed it would be necessary that his report should be quite verbatim? There is a good deal of official reporting in this country which I may venture to speak of, because I have been responsible for it for a long time, both in these committees and in some judicial work, and in other places. The duty of an official shorthand writer is well understood. It is not to give a ‘full report,’ but to give a verbatim report; by which I do not mean, and I do not think any official shorthand writer will understand it to mean, a report containing grammatical imperfections and obvious slips, which the speaker at the moment would, perhaps, recall, but a good, clean report of all his words. In principle, the duty of the official shorthand writer is not that which I believe reporters in ancient times supposed to be their duty,—that of conveying the thoughts of the speaker, regardless of his words; *but that of conveying the words of the speaker with just such slight rearrangement as may sometimes be necessary to place them in proper form.*

“Are those rearrangements made by the shorthand writer during the progress of his work, or does he actually take it down as said, and rearrange it afterward?—He practically always rearranges, to some slight extent, as he goes along. If the speaker uses the wrong word and corrects it, it is corrected by the shorthand writer at the same time, just as would be done if you were dictating slowly to some one in longhand.

“Does the shorthand writer correct grammatical errors as he goes along?—To some extent, but not largely.

“Then if an official reporter were employed and were to make any error, which in the opinion of the speaker was an important one, would the responsibility lie entirely on the shorthand writer?—Certainly; he would be answerable for it, just as any officer is answerable for any thing he does wrong in the discharge of his duty. Official shorthand writing is not altogether a novelty. \* \* \*

“But from your experience of foreign official reporting, is any

correction by the reporter or by the official editor allowed, or, is the only alteration that which is given in by the members themselves?—I may be allowed to say that we collected a great deal of evidence upon that subject last year for the International Shorthand Congress, and I was astonished to find how very much the practice is the same in nearly all countries. In one case the official report of the debates was summarily described by one of the shorthand writers as *verbatim cum grano salis*. That is very much what I have been endeavoring to describe as the duty of an official shorthand writer in this country, namely, to give the very words, *but in an intelligible form, by a slight rearrangement, if necessary*. That is the reply that was given in various terms by most of the shorthand writers to whom the question was put, and it was specifically put to the shorthand writers of every country in which there are official shorthand writers.

“Mr. Leycester objected to the term ‘*verbatim*.’ I understood him to do so as implying that there might be remarks made such as ‘well, now,’ and so on, which need not be introduced; that would be his meaning, as I understood?—I should agree with Mr. Leycester, and I should prefer to call it a ‘*full report*,’ provided it be understood that by a ‘*full report*’ is meant a report of every thing *except redundancies*.

### Systems of long or short turns.

Touching the systems of long or short turns, he expressed himself as follows,—and it will readily be seen how close is the connection between that subject and the one now discussed :

“In one case (the short turns) the reporter becomes a mere machine; whereas, in the other (the long turns), he has to exercise intelligence?—I do not think under either system it would be possible to obtain a good result without the reporter’s exercising intelligence, but he has more opportunities of exercising intelligence under the one system than the other.

“His intelligence comes into greater service when he takes the longer reports?—Yes.

"Of the two systems, you would prefer that?—Yes; and that is not my own individual opinion only; one very good authority that I cite for it is M. Lagache, who was for many years the chief stenographer in Paris, and is now a senator. He told me that the short-turn system was not in his opinion so good a system. I have a memorandum of a conversation with him on the subject. I also know the opinion of many other shorthand writers who have practised in the courts, to be the same. The ex-president of the Institute of Shorthand Writers, practising in the courts of justice, expressed that opinion at the Shorthand Congress."

And why should the reporter know what has taken place before he entered the room, or have the thread even of the sentences, if he is only and merely called upon to give a photograph of the sounds he hears? It is clear that in the opinion of Mr. Gurney-Salter, the stenographer must always exercise his intelligence, as he takes good care to tell the committee in the answers just quoted. Not that I mean to convey the idea that there is no intellectual exercise in the mere copying of the shorthand notes into longhand writing; but any one will admit that there is far less of such exertion than when some editing is expected to be done.

## **A newspaper reporter requires a particular training.**

"And also, in the third place, would you say it requires a particular training for the newspaper reporter, which is slightly different from that required by an official reporter?—Yes, there is no doubt that there is a difference between the reporter and what is called the shorthand writer, in the professional sense of the term. They start from different principles. The old theory of the reporter was that it was his duty to give the thoughts of the speaker, as far as possible—to a certain extent, at all events, in his words. On the other hand, the old theory of the shorthand writer was, that it was his business to record the very words, with any grammatical imperfections. I think myself that the old-fashioned shorthand writer erred on the one hand

in not correcting slips and grammatical errors, simply photographing what took place. I think, on the other hand, the reporter sometimes fell into the error of drawing sketches instead of recording. There is not now, I think, the difference that there was formerly between the two, but it would be generally admitted that between the shorthand writer and the reporter there still is some difference of that kind ; the shorthand writer has always been brought up to record the very words, while the reporter has been brought up to put the words in a legible presentable form before the public.

“I understand you to state that a reporter who was accustomed to report for the newspapers, was more in the habit of putting into words the thoughts of the speaker than of reporting exactly what was said ?—I said that was the ancient idea. I remember Mr. Ross used to say, distinctly, that a reporter in olden times considered it his duty to reproduce the thoughts, rather than the words.

“But I wish to know about the present day ?—I do not think that between a first-rate reporter of the present day taking a speech by, say Mr. Gladstone, speaking deliberately, and a first-rate shorthand writer taking down the same speech, there would be any discrepancy at all in the results.”

It must be observed that Mr. Gurney-Salter tries to make clear the difference there is in the training of the two—so far as England is concerned at least,—between an “official shorthand writer,” as he is called there, and a “reporter.” Here, the names are not exactly the same, but the two are known. For in England what they call an “official shorthand writer” is one who is more particularly required to take testimony before the various courts of law, or of parliamentary inquiries carried on by select committees of either house of Parliament, or Royal Commissions—special and temporary bodies appointed by the crown for a definite purpose, and generally, all work where verbatim shorthand notes have to be transcribed word for word as in the case of the evidence of a witness ; while the word “reporter” applies to a man who, although an expert shorthand

writer, too, is nevertheless more particularly occupied with the reporting of speeches, be they delivered on the floor of the houses of Parliament, on the public platform, or elsewhere. However, Mr. Gurney-Salter plainly declared that the shorthand writer is supposed to do editing, if he is to do his duty intelligently.

I do not suppose that Mr. Thomas Allen Reed, the *doyen* of English stenographers, is an unknown individual amongst my American brethren. His long experience of over half a century of practice, his work, which comprises thousands of note-books, his writings, in a charming style, and his unrivalled devotedness to his art, as well as his numerous studies on the duty of a stenographer, have earned for him a universal reputation above all in the stenographic world. However, I hope that I may be permitted to use the authority of that gentleman in order to show that the photograph system, in the matter of speech reporting, does not commend itself to him, and to urge that it would be, to my mind, a great error for the young shorthand writer to adopt it because it has the approval of such an able man as the German professor of Dresden. It is precisely for the reason that I have the greatest respect for the opinion of Dr. Zeibig, that I seek to oppose against him such a high authority as Mr. Reed ; for I think the latter has achieved in the profession as good a position as the former, and that the opinion of one deserves as much credit as do the views of the other, so far as ability and long experience of the very highest practical character are concerned.

## **Mr. Reed's truthful and realistic picture of the Reporter's work.**

" In transcribing hastily-written notes of a rapid legal argument or a scientific lecture or a metaphysical discourse, the demand upon the intellectual faculties is of course considerably increased ; and when any special difficulties are experienced, such as a very loose or

involved style on the part of the speaker, or an indistinctness of utterance, the task of disentangling confused sentences and supplying the omissions, to say nothing of giving a meaning to ill-shaped symbols capable of any number of 'various readings,' involves an amount of mental effort and application little suspected by the uninitiated.

"I am perfectly aware that there are many shorthand writers who fail to accomplish this task with the requisite skill; who, having, probably with great manual dexterity, taken their shorthand notes, set about the labor of transcribing, troubled with no misgiving as to the best rendering of complicated sentences, heedless of the most obvious violations of the rules of syntax, anxious only to get through the work as quickly as possible, and then to send in the bill. But I am not referring to the labors of the careless or the incompetent; I allude to the efforts of the painstaking, conscientious, and intelligent shorthand writer, when I say that they involve no inconsiderable amount of mental exertion. I do not now mean the exertion required in following the speaker, but that which is demanded in producing an accurate and at the same time a readable transcript of the notes that have been taken.

"The first care of the reporter in transcribing his notes should be to produce an intelligible report; and he will hardly accomplish this unless he himself understands what he writes. If he fails to follow the train of ideas which he has to record, the probability is, that more or less of confusion will be observable in his report. He should endeavor to place himself for the time in the position of the speaker; and generally his aim should be to present his report in such a form as the speaker himself would be likely to adopt if he were his own reporter. The extent to which he may depart from the phraseology employed, or omit any of the speaker's words, will greatly depend upon the style of the speaker and the nature of the report required. If he has to supply a full—called, by courtesy, a *verbatim* report, he will, of course, adhere very closely, but not slavishly, to

the speaker's words. If a condensed report is needed, he will take greater liberties with the wording of the sentences, and concern himself chiefly with a presentation of the ideas in a concise, intelligible, and grammatical form. In either case, especially in the latter, the manner in which the task is performed will greatly depend upon the reporter's apprehension of the speaker's meaning. \* \* \* The task of the reporter in transcribing his notes, is not unlike that of the translator, especially in the necessity of an intelligent apprehension of the ideas conveyed ; and I take it that both should be guided to some extent by the same principle. The question which I have no doubt every good translator often mentally puts to himself in the course of his labor is, ' How would my author have expressed this idea if he had written in my language instead of his own ? ' In like manner, the reporter, as I have said, should often seek to put himself in the position of the speaker, and give such a rendering of his words as will be best adapted to express the ideas sought to be conveyed.

"In some cases this is no difficult task. When a full report is required of speeches like those delivered by Mr. Gladstone or Lord Derby, whose thoughts almost invariably and of necessity clothe themselves in clear and precise language, the reporter has scarcely any thing to do but accurately to record the words that fall on the ear. But those are exceptional instances ; and in by far the greater number of cases, the words uttered need something more than mere transmission ; they require passing through the alembic of the reporter's brain, there to undergo such transmutation as an intelligent mind deems necessary.

"I do not mean to say that it is a reporter's duty entirely to recast a slovenly speech, and present it in the form of a carefully written essay. I have somewhere seen it stated, not only that this should be done, but that the reporter should endeavor to record all the points which the speaker *intended* to make, in addition to those which he has *actually* made. I need hardly say that few reporters would care to undertake a labor so herculean, and perhaps few

speakers of any note would care, to this extent, to intrust their reputation to the tender mercies of a reporter, however skilful, who should take this enlarged view of his functions. The general object to be obtained is to make the speaker speak intelligently, grammatically, and, I will not say gracefully, but smoothly, without, however, suppressing any marked individual characteristics worth preserving. To make some speakers speak smoothly, would be to conceal their individuality in a way that neither they nor the public would desire. But as a rule, reporters should omit needless tautology, soften down awkward angularities, and supply obvious omissions in composition.

“With regard to the omission of unimportant matter, very much will depend upon whether a *full* or a *condensed* report is required. In the case of a full report, it will often be sufficient to omit some of the frequently recurring words at the commencement of sentences, such as ‘now,’ ‘now, then,’ ‘let me say,’ etc., which are not noticed in the speaker, but which, when often repeated, greatly mar the effect of a printed speech.”

“With regard to the second point I have mentioned as coming within the scope of the ‘reporters’ duties—the rounding off of angularities, little need be said. The style of some speakers is so broken and disjointed that nothing short of an entire reconstruction of the sentences is needed to render them even passably readable. This does not necessarily arise from any confusion of ideas on the part of the speaker. It is sometimes the result of a rapid flow of thought with which the tongue is unable to keep pace. Whatever its cause, the reporter should do his best to remedy the defect, taking scrupulous care that while altering the verbal expression he does not misrepresent the sentiments of the speaker. In the case of a very involved sentence, it is a good plan to emancipate yourself entirely from the speaker’s phraseology; to do your best to ascertain the speaker’s meaning, then to shut your book, or close your eyes, and, oblivious of every word you have written, express the sentiment in your own way. It is not often, perhaps, that a speaker’s words are



so intractable ; but every reporter will occasionally meet with instances of this kind.

“ One of the most common errors of public speakers is that of beginning a sentence and never finishing it. In most cases the reporter can easily supply the missing words, or by a little judicious omission or alteration at an early part of the sentence, render unnecessary the termination which the speaker's form of words requires. Nothing is more common than for a speaker to begin by saying, “ if I am told that,” ‘ when it is contended that,’ or some similar phrase, and then, after pursuing the intricacies of a long sentence, wholly to forget the ‘ when ’ or the ‘ if,’ and leave the result to the imagination. In such a case, it will generally suffice to turn the hypothetical into a somewhat more direct statement, and render the words ‘ I may be told that,’ ‘ it is (or may be) contended.’ Here is a specimen of a literally unfinished style of speaking such as will often try the patience of the young reporter :—

“ ‘ When I remember how many persons have been benefited by this society, which was established not only for the relief of the poor,—because you will remember, Mr. Chairman, that I said distinctly when we first commenced operations in this town, though I was opposed by almost every individual who attended that meeting—not that I had any fear of opposition, for I maintain that if a man cannot stand against a little opposition he is worth very little ; but when I am told that this society, or indeed any other society of a similar character—for I am happy to say that in this country the spirit of charity is as widely diffused as the air we breathe, and it would be an evil day for England if that spirit should ever be extinguished,—No, sir ; I maintain that this cause belongs to the rich, as well as to the poor.’

“ It is quite possible that the syntax of this peculiar collocation of words, especially when uttered *ore rotundo* on a public platform, would pass without observation except at the reporters' table, and that, accompanied with a moderate amount of emphasis and gesticu-

lation, the utterance would be received with 'loud applause.' It will be seen, however, that in those few lines there are three sentences begun and not finished. 'When I remember'—what then? 'I said distinctly'—said what? 'When I am told that this society.' 'Society' is a nominative without a verb, and the 'when' is wholly ignored. Now, let us attempt, without altering them more than is necessary for the purpose, to put the words into a readable shape. The meaning is sufficiently obvious :—

"Let us remember how many persons have been benefited by this society, which was established for the benefit not only of the poor but of the rich. You will remember, Mr. Chairman, my statements on this subject when we commenced our operations in this town. True, I was opposed by almost every individual who attended our meeting. Not that I had any fear of opposition, for I maintain that he who cannot withstand opposition is worth very little. I repeat, it is not the poor alone who are concerned in this society, or indeed in any other of a similar character; for I am happy to say that in this country the spirit of charity is as widely diffused as the air we breathe, and it would be an evil day for England when that spirit should be extinguished. No, sir; I maintain that this cause belongs to the rich as well as to the poor.' "

"But while the kind of speech of which the above may be taken as a type, stands in absolute need of revision, it is not to be supposed that every species of abruptness or angularity should be rounded off, and every imperfect sentence reconstructed. There is a kind of abruptness which gives character to a speech, and which, therefore, the reporter should carefully preserve. To supply correcting words and patch up broken sentences might in such a case deprive a speech of half its vigor and originality. I have seen characteristic speeches of this kind spoiled by the injudicious manipulation of the reporter who has been at infinite pains to 'dress up' sentences that might have been rendered precisely as they were uttered. These cases, however, are rare, and they may be easily discriminated by the exercise of ordinary judgment."

## Is the report of a speech to be strictly verbatim or condensed or edited ?

In order to know to what extent the shorthand writers employed for the official reporting of parliamentary debates in different countries hereafter mentioned were doing "editing" work in their transcription, or if they were obliged to give the debates verbatim, the committee of the International Shorthand Congress, held in London in 1887, issued the following question :—

"Is it (the 'report,' or transcript) to be strictly verbatim, or may it be condensed, or edited, etc. ?"

A short but impartial review of the answers given to that question by the various official bureaux of the following countries will enable us to arrive at a just conclusion as to what system has been considered to answer best the general want and which has commanded the best consideration. It is clear, also, that in those answers will be found a very good sign as to what is the prevailing opinion amongst experts ; for no doubt the rule cannot have been established without the advice of practical men in the matter :—

**CANADA.** *Senate*—The report, said Holland Brothers, is a full one, but "edited for style,"—as they believe is the case in England.

*House of Commons*—The report is as nearly verbatim as possible, consistently with good literary form. It is sometimes slightly condensed.

**AUSTRALIA.** From Mr. HADLEY, Melbourne—In Victoria, the report is condensed, or edited, according to the character of the debate. The editorial faculty is exercised.

**INDIA.** From Mr. WILSON, Calcutta—The report is made according to order.

**AMERICA.** From Mr. D. F. TRUNPHY—The debates are published verbatim in one sense, but, of course, not so as to present

glaring grammatical inaccuracies or slips of the tongue ; they are *not* condensed, or edited for style.

GERMANY. From Dr. ZEIBIG—At Berlin, the transcript may be neither condensed nor edited for style ; the strictest adherence to the words is required. The same rule prevails at Dresden.

MUNICH. From Dr. LAUTENHAMMER—The transcript must be strictly verbatim.

FRANCE. From M. DEPOIN and Dr. WEBER—The reviseurs make corrections in style, and necessary rectifications. The report is *in extenso*.

ITALY.—SIGNOR MARZOVATI—The notes are transcribed as faithfully as possible.

HOLLAND.—HERR STEGER—The transcript is required to be verbatim—*cum grano salis*.

BELGIUM.—M. LA-COMBLE—The shorthand writers ought naturally to respect always the thoughts of the speaker in all their developments, and, as much as possible, his particular style ; but, of course, they have not only the right, but the duty, to correct inaccuracies which occur in extempore speaking. Whilst endeavoring, therefore, to reproduce as exactly as possible the speaker's words, they seek to unite accuracy in language with fidelity in reproduction of the speeches.

DENMARK.—HERR DESSAU—A verbatim transcript is required, but slight alterations for style are allowed.

NORWAY.—HERR CAPPELIN—The reports must be verbatim.

Thus it will be seen that out of eleven countries here given, two only are mentioned as requiring strictly verbatim reports, while the rest admit editing for style. To those must be added several others, such as the Argentine Republic, Austria-Hungary, and England.

I have taken the care, perhaps at the serious risk of wearying the audience, of giving in full the opinions expressed by eminent men in the profession in the course of the inquiries, held by the British Parliament during the last fifteen years or elsewhere, and to give a *resumé* of the rules applying to the revision of the notes of the official stenographers in several other countries, in order to show that, almost unanimously, experts in the matter have thought that a shorthand writer reporting a speech must not act as a mere photographer, as Dr. Zeibig puts it, but, on the contrary, that for almost every one it is a cardinal principle that in this particular work, "rearrangement" is of absolute necessity; that the most audacious amongst them never thought of giving a mere photographic report, as suggested.

## Opinions of public men in England on the character of a newspaper report.

Now, let us try to give the views of public men on the matter,—those, after all, most seriously interested. I have the opinion of several leading public men in England, in the reports of the inquiries above quoted, and I shall forthwith give a few only of them,—for a complete exposition of all those views would be too long for the patience of my hearers.

Viscount Eversley, who had been for eighteen years Speaker of the House of Commons, declared that "if they (the members) wish to have a perfectly true report of what they have said in Parliament, it is well worth their while to take the trouble of correcting their speeches."

As I wish to give a fair *resumé* of the views contained in the documents before me, I will give the opinion of Lord Halsbury, Lord High Chancellor, in 1888 :

"I understand your lordship's view to be, that there should be an official verbatim report published as rapidly as possible after the

occurrence of the debate, and not subject to correction ?—Certainly. There might be correction permitted to a certain extent, although I confess I would myself prefer it to be without correction at all. Take what takes place in a committee here. Very often the evidence of the witnesses is submitted to them before it is finally printed, to see if there is any thing incorrect ; but it would be a gross abuse of that power if a witness attempted to alter any thing. He is only expected to alter any thing where there has been an obvious mistake, but not to change any thing he has said. I should object to any thing but a most modified revision, upon the ground that it would be fatal to the instantaneous publication of the report ; and, in the next place, I should think that the great value of an official report would be, that it was verbatim, and without the subsequent intervention of the author of the speech."

Of course, one could have pointed out to the noble lord that there is a material difference between an individual appearing as witness before a court of law or any other tribunal of inquiry, and the same party speaking *impromptu* to a house or a public meeting. While in the latter case he has almost no time to prepare his sentences, arrange his words in a grammatical order, or to look for the exact terms conveying the exact meaning of what he has in his mind, the former has plenty of time to do all that, and nobody would observe even if he paused before he gave his answers,—which are naturally short on account of the many questions put. Who ever dreamed of a public speaker stopping here and there to fix the grammatical order of his words, and, perhaps, in the very middle of a sentence, to look for the exact words, while the same thing is of daily occurrence in the courts of law, where witnesses are examined, and nobody ever thinks of finding fault with them for so doing. If an orator were to take such a liberty with his audience, he would be ridiculed to such an extent that he would himself feel that the thing could not be done again. That explains the very marked difference there is between the two ; though Lord Halsbury cites the case of a report of evidence as similar to that of the report of a speech ; which

explains the grave mistake he committed in assimilating one case to the other in order to support his own conclusion. However, by the answer above quoted, it is evident that the noble lord admitted corrections ; though, as he said, "in a most modified form." And it must be borne in mind that he is an extreme believer in verbatim work, probably because he has very little experience of the inside working of a shorthand writer's profession, as it will clearly appear by the following answers, when one reads them side by side with what has been written by all expert and experienced men of the profession :

"Are you aware that there is not one speaker in the House of Commons who is reported verbatim ?—I should not have thought it was so universal as that. If my memory serves me, I have often heard speeches which, on reading them the next day, seemed to have been reported verbatim.

"You are not referring to speakers who send their speeches up to the gallery ?—No ; I referred to such a speaker as Mr. Gladstone, for example ; when I have read his speech the next morning after it had been delivered, it appeared to have been reported verbatim."

Mr. Leonard Henry Courtney, member of the House of Commons, being asked what he thought of the effect of an actually verbatim report, including the slips and grammatical errors that may occur in the speeches of certain speakers, said :—"I do not think it would be worth the pains." Further on, he was asked if he thought that members did not require a verbatim report ; and he stated, "I never heard any desire for it."

The Right Honorable Arthur Peel, then and now Speaker of the House of Commons, was also examined. Having been then Speaker for over twenty years, he had a good deal of experience in the matter, so far as the desire of members was concerned for having a verbatim report of debates :—

"Let me refer, first, to the former system :—you do not think that an absolutely verbatim report would be practicable ?—I do not

quite understand what an absolutely verbatim report can be ; it must, in any case, I suppose, be revised, either by the shorthand writer or by the member who has made the speech.

“ I think it has been put to the committee in this way : that a verbatim report would mean a report giving, word for word, every thing each speaker said, except such expressions as ‘ well, now,’ and such purely interjectory expressions as would not appear in any report. The witnesses, I think, have been agreed as to the correction of the report, but primarily, as to the report itself, do you think it would be practicable or reasonable to attempt a *verbatim* report, in the sense I have stated ?—It might be practicable, but I do not think it would be reasonable. \* \* \* [Such a report might or might not be corrected by the several members. If it were not corrected, do you think there would be much complaint as to its accuracy ?—I think revision is essential, in the interests of members].”

## English newspapers give full and accurate reports of debates.

I have done with the quotations of the individual opinion of public men in England, as recorded in the proceedings of the recent inquiries made by the British Parliament. What has been, I may be very properly asked, the decision of the committees that have heard the evidence ? The decision, as expressed by the report, was to the effect, not even of having an official report of the debates ; which decision might be considered as a mistake, in an historical point of view, although it must be admitted that there is no country in the world where the public press goes to the same expense and succeeds in giving so full and accurate a report of the debates occurring in the national Parliament, as the English newspapers do. To be convinced of this fact,—which had a great deal to do with the decision of the committees,—it sufficed to read the reports published by the “ Times,” the “ Standard,” of London, “ The Scotsman,” of Edinburgh, of the provincial press, and many others, which have as many



as fifteen and seventeen shorthand writers employed daily to make out those reports. The great drawback, for historical reference, is, that information is scattered in the files of a great many newspapers; for speeches of only local importance are especially reported in the local paper of the individual member who has delivered it. But taken as a whole, the press reports are, I think, as complete as they can be; and with "Hansard" to supply the gross deficiencies that may happen, it is as accurate a record as a great many might desire. However, whatever wisdom or error one may find in the decision arrived at, the verbatim or photograph system of reporting the speeches has been completely left in the shade, as unreasonable, if practicable.

## **Practice adopted in other countries as regards report of debates.**

Now, let us turn our eyes to other countries. Of course I have not, so far as they are concerned, as much information, or with the same fulness of detail, as I happen to possess for England. However, one can arrive at a very fair and accurate conclusion by taking, as an expression of opinion on the particular point here discussed, the various rules enforced in the countries where there exist official systems for the publication of the debates in Parliament. By the tabulated return published in the "Transactions of the International Shorthand Congress" held in London in 1887, we find that in eleven countries, namely, Canada, Australia, India, America, Germany, France, Italy, Holland, Belgium, Denmark and Norway, comprising all the countries from which answers reached the Congress, the members have the right to revise their speeches. To that list must be added the Argentine Republic, Austria, Hungaria, as can be seen by the proceedings of the Paris Congress. Now, to have established such a rule, it is obvious that in those countries the legislators must have thoroughly discussed the various ways of reporting speeches, the verbatim system as well as all the others; that such a discussion must also have been enlightened by the opinion of the experienced

shorthand writers. If this is so—and I think that it holds good—I believe I have the right to conclude that the photograph system has been found “unreasonable” everywhere,—to use the expression of Speaker Peel; and that in this general rule, adopted universally, we have the highest expression of opinion, not only of experts in the matter, but also of the men mostly interested in having a good report made of what they say on public questions. It is a verdict worth the consideration of all who desire to form their judgment on this point: to disregard it would be committing a blunder. For why should the stenographer have too much respect for poorly constructed sentences, or any like defects, when the speaker has the right to correct them? Why should the shorthand writer who is an educated man, not himself do that kind of work, and save so much trouble to the speaker?

### **Consensus of opinion in favour of revision or re-arrangement of speeches as taken down in shorthand.**

I think I have shown that the opinion universally prevailing amongst the professional experts and public men in all countries is in favor of a *revision* or *rearrangement* of the speeches as taken down by shorthand. I might stop here; for this demonstration conclusively shows that the contrary opinion has no real foundation on which to lay its claims to the best judgment of shorthand writers; but a few further observations may not be out of place.

Why should the general experience, both amongst stenographers and public men, point to the necessity of revision in the transcription of notes? There must be very strong reasons for that. There are, indeed; and I will try to mention merely a few of them.

The publication of a speech has not only for its object to interest those who may read it; it gives also very valuable material for history. Now, is it not far better for history to have the real expression of the *mind* of a public man, than the mere words he has

uttered, which words might only be *lapsi linguæ*? Is it not a fact that the *bona fide* extemporizer, however able and educated he may be, is always liable to miss the real or proper expression necessary to convey the absolute meaning he has in his mind? What advantage would it be, for historical pursuits, to have hundreds of words, perfectly useless? for it must be borne in mind that the speaker generally feels that his phraseology is not adequate to his thought, and strives to make himself understood, and for that purpose comes back upon the same point until he has found the necessary words to convey his meaning. It may also happen, and does, that although the speaker may feel his sentence is not what it should be, and that neither his hearers nor those who will read his speech, will quite make out what he intended to express at a particular point in his argument, because the proper words did not present themselves to his mind at the moment,—it may happen that he will forget, in the heat of his extemporization, to come back to this point and make himself clear. Hence the necessity of the speaker's revision, as established everywhere. If a contrary practice prevailed, most speeches would be worthless on account of their obscurity, or would redound to the discredit of the speakers themselves. In the revision, on the other hand, history has really what a public man intended to say,—his real and deliberate thoughts and opinion. As Mr. Max Backler said at the Paris Congress :—"The authenticity of a speech consists in the revision made by the speaker."

Just fancy what a historical treasure it would be if we had most of the speeches delivered by the great orators of ancient Rome and Greece, revised by themselves! But the same speeches would be almost worthless, if they were only photographs; for they would contain so many apparent contradictions that there would be material for endless controversies amongst historians. Even as it is, with so few left of those great productions, is there not enough of this kind of discussion?

## Debates under the impulse of Extemporization.

But that is not all; and we must not lose sight of the fact that, especially in our modern parliaments, the greatest bulk of the debates

is made under the impulse of extemporization. But few speakers have the time to prepare the line of argument they desire to use. Very often they have to speak at a moment's notice ; and although they have their general principles to guide them, they nevertheless have not the leisure to think, to ponder in the way they would desire over what they will say ; hence, diffuseness in their utterances. It often happens that a public orator when he rises to speak does not intend to continue at any length, but many incidents may arise to generate currents of thought, which, though akin to his general feelings, are at first vague and uncertain in his mind ; after a few sentences they may come out clearly and distinctly. Why present the first confused words when the speaker was laboring for precisely what he repeats afterward in distinct and perhaps glowing language ? Why keep those ugly repetitions which owe their existence in the speech solely to the fact that the speaker had no time, even in his mind, to fix and arrange his utterances in a presentable shape ? For it must not be forgotten that there is a great difference between the impression given by a speech heard, and the very same speech read. The former impression might be a very bright one, indeed, while the latter might fill one with a feeling of astonishment, perhaps something worse, when both were compared in the experience of the same individual. I have gone through the process not once, but many times, and never could I find even a shadow of the real emotion I had experienced on hearing the speaker himself. Sometimes that emotion had gotten hold of me whilst taking my shorthand notes, and when I had to make my transcription it seemed to me that the words were not the same, for they did not longer impress my feelings to the same degree. Why ? Because afterward I did not have the powerful magnetism of a brilliant speaker to move me, such as Mons. Laurier or Mons. Chapleau. The same thing happens also to an ordinary hearer. And, strange to say, but true as strange, one who is called an ordinarily good speaker,—that is, a man destitute of those brilliant personal qualities which go so far to give one the much coveted reputation of a great orator,—produces the reverse impression. A friend of mine who dwells in Paris, who had several times

heard Thiers and Gambetta, told me that the former was a most disagreeable man to hear, while the latter charmed even his most ardent opponents ; and he used to add :—<sup>A</sup> I never could read with artistic pleasure one speech of Gambetta, though they must have been rearranged ; and I was always delighted to read those of Thiers, who was reported almost verbatim, without any change in the phraseology.” I can add, that my experience confirms that conclusion.

### **The best reported speech is the one best arranged by the reporter in transcription.**

A French writer of tragedies used to say, when submitting his writings to friends in order to have them thoroughly criticised before they were acted at the theatre :—“ Do not spare them ; for *tout ce qui est coupé, n'est pas sifflé.*” And in those words there is a good deal more truth than poetry. Applying the same saying to speech reporting, I would say, that the best reported speech is not the one which contains every word uttered by the speaker, but the *best arranged* one, which also retains the *largest possible* quantity of the very words taken down. For it is almost an axiom amongst men of the profession, that the more a speech is rearranged, the more the author thinks it is verbatim !

After due consideration of all this, is it possible to adopt the view of Dr. Zeibig, when he says that the report of a speech should be but a literal reproduction of the words uttered ? “ should resemble a photograph ? ” Although I profess the greatest respect for the opinion of such an eminent man as he, I contend, nevertheless, that, as Speaker Peel said, “ it would be unreasonable, if practicable.” But is it, in matters of public discourse, even practicable ? I humbly think not. The best that a shorthand writer can possibly do is to take down every word uttered ; he cannot go any farther. Dr. Zeibig seems to believe that the duty of a stenographer is essentially similar whether he takes down the evidence of a witness, or a speech in a legislative hall. That is a great mistake. No court of law would allow, for instance, a witness to answer by a mere action

or sign of the head, or shoulders ; he would have to speak, and say distinctly, in so many words, what he intended to convey. The same rule does not apply to the public speaker. While the latter can use, and does, very largely, gesticulations as a supplement to his sentences, the former cannot do it. How would a stenographer be able to make good the absence of words, rendered useless for the hearers by the use of gesticulations, if he could add one word to his notes ?

That idea is very well expressed, although in slightly enlarged form, in Mr. Rose's paper of last year, when he says :—

“In this country we have all had our experience. The great American orator and statesman is so occupied with ideas that he has no time for the consideration of such simple things as words. He generally makes use of the first ones that come handy ; and if they fall short in any way of expressing his ideas, he supplements them with suggestive gesticulations, or leaves it for his hearers to supply the deficiency from their imagination ; and if his speech is to be published, he expects the stenographer to not only revise it, round out the periods, and add facts and figures, but he expects him to decorate, embellish, and polish, to the extent that his constituents will be fairly dazzled, and be compelled to wear smoked glasses in order to read it comfortably.”

Nor is the speaker to be blamed for sometimes using very largely the mode of suggestive gesticulations to complete the meaning of his sentences, when his words fail to do so ; for, speaking without having had time to write out what he intended to say, he has the right to use every proper means in his power to arrive at his object. Now, the primary object of a public speaker is to convince ; and who would declare that gesticulations have no part in that process ? He may convince by broken sentences or sentences constructed in such a way as to be unreadable, but “skillfully supplemented by suggestive gesticulations,” as Mr. Rose puts it.

But I find in Dr. Zeibig's own lines a proof that the photograph system is not and cannot be practicable. He admits himself, in the

following words, the necessity of the shorthand writer's revision : "That the stenographer may correct slight grammatical errors and slips of the tongue on the spot, is, on the other hand, a matter of course." But even that might be considered by some as "an embellishment of speeches," as the Doctor puts it in another part of his paper ; and this he condemns as against his theory, which he deems to be the best. Who will draw the line and say authoritatively, "This is only a slip of the tongue ?" etc. This is not merely a question to amuse the gallery, for Lord Halsbury, already quoted, with his logical mind, has thought proper to examine it, and here is what he thinks :

"\* \* \* Sometimes a correction of grammar would lead to too much alteration. If you were to correct an incoherent or ungrammatical sentence, you might have to reconstruct it. Because I think what a speaker very often does is this : he begins with the theory of a sentence in his mind, and he constitutes and rearranges his sentence entirely ; and he would have to do that with the report." The distinguished Doctor gives what follows as an argument :

"Then, in case a speaker should have violated the laws of oratory or of syntax, he would be more likely to be on his guard and not transgress those rules in the future. When the speakers exert themselves to learn to speak, then only can political eloquence in our parliaments be revived."

### **The worse a speaker the more he pinches on the reporter.**

I really do not object to the speakers exerting themselves to learn to speak, and I think to do so would be very commendable indeed ; but this argument seems to me to ignore the too well-known weaknesses of human nature. I have been a parliamentary reporter for the last twenty years ; I have published, in book-form, over 15,000 pages of debates ; and I must say that I have never met with

a public man who admitted to the poor shorthand writer that once he may have made the slightest mistake. And I am not the only one who has had that sad experience. All my confrères speak in the same strain. One of them told me once what I shall never forget :—

“The worse the speaker, the more he pinches on the unfortunate stenographer.” He who said those words was an old hand. I am pretty nearly an “old hand” myself, now, and my unbroken experience declares that the statement is true. For one good-natured public man who will come to you and tell you good words, there are scores who will denounce your work, no matter how much better their speeches have been made by your labor and anxiety. After such an experience, how can one hope, by “photographing,” to induce those speakers not to transgress the laws of oratory or of syntax, or exert themselves to learn to speak? I remember an incident which happened to one of my confrères who is with me now on the Dominion Debates staff for the House of Commons. Mr. Owens was then reporter of the *Montreal Gazette*, and was doing reporting duty during the session of the Legislature of the Province of Quebec. One day he resolved upon reporting verbatim,—and truly verbatim—a certain member who was very fond indeed of speaking, but who could hardly put words in the right place, or construct a sentence that meant any thing. All that was credited to him in the newspapers—and, of course, there was a good deal—consisted of reports specially “cooked” in the reporters’ room. My friends Owens sat down to work one night when the said speaker was on his feet. He had not said ten words before he was absolutely mixed up, as usual. Mr. Owens, a witty Irishman, carefully noted down every word, no matter how it came out, in the deluge of very noisy sounds made by the would-be speaker. Of course, this method was not extended to the whole speech. The next day the *Gazette* greatly attracted the attention of the members in the reading-room, for there, in the great organ, in black and white, were two or three paragraphs of *verbatim* reporting of that man’s speech of the preceding evening. He was one of the first to read it. He got into such a fury that, having met my unfortunate friend in the lobby, he put



his fist in the reporter's face. My friend got a black-eye and a bleeding nose as a reward for his ability and faithfulness as a verbatim or "photograph" stenographer and transcriber. There was a correction given, and received ; but who would deny that it was received on the wrong side ? I need not say that Mr. Owens avoided repeating the experience. He would be the last to believe in Dr. Zeibig's method of *teaching* speakers to exert themselves to conform to the laws of oratory or of syntax. He would be only too happy if they would exert themselves not to transgress the good old law that protects the person of every human being from assault, whether that person be a "photograph verbatim" reporter, or follow some safer calling.

Mr. Rose quotes his own experience in the matter—which experience, by the way, is less tragical—and, as will be seen by the following extract, has arrived at the same conclusion :

"I once undertook to reform a lawyer by the method suggested by our distinguished friend, Doctor Zeibig. I held up before him the following question which he had propounded to a witness :—

"Now, assuming the west line of Cross street to pass east of that hickory tree about three feet, can you tell, on this map,—assuming that this west line is east of that hickory tree, about three feet,—the centre of it,—the centre of the hickory tree,—that the west line is about three feet east,—the Beard line,—of the hickory tree,—can you tell where your west line would strike these lots 4 and 5, assuming that this map is made in accordance with the line I have last described,—that is, a line about three feet further east at the hickory tree, than this is,—the west line ?"

"The result was not entirely what I had hoped it would be ; and since then that lawyer does not think I am much of a stenographer.

## Great defect in public speakers—mixing up sentences which require to be disentangled.

And here is the final opinion of Mr. Rose on that reform scheme :—

“I was once of opinion that this great defect in our public speakers might be corrected, or at least remedied, by concert of action among stenographers,—by calling attention to the fact, and that our suggestion would be kindly accepted, and a little more attention be given to separating the ‘golden grains’ from the mass of chaff; but experience has taught me differently; and my conclusions are, that we must, for the present at least, wait for some other agency to bring about the reformation, and must continue to act, as we have in the past, not only as harvesters in the fields of oratory, but must do the thrashing, separate the wheat from the tares, and get the crop ready for market.”

From the report of the discussion that took place on Mr. Rose's paper, I pick out the following lines :—

“Mr. ROSE—The trouble with the subject suggested by Prof. Zeibig does not arise in the reporting of the words of the speaker, but rather in the copying out of the *exact* words.

“Mr. LITTLE—Well, a man is a fool who does that.

“Mr. ROSE—He says that the German stenographers submit a literal translation for the reformation of the speaker.

“The PRESIDENT—Undoubtedly the best speeches are made by stenographers.

“Mr. LITTLE—I do not think there is the slightest question but that many a man's reputation is made by the man who is reporting him; that is, if a stenographer has head enough to pick out the sentences that ought not to go in a man's speech, and to put in what ought to go in.

"The PRESIDENT—Speakers never recognize the fact that the stenographer has done any thing except to follow him verbatim.

"Mrs. BURNZ—The speaker thinks that the revised report is what he meant to say.

"Mr. LAW—The report is looked upon as accurate, if the English is good and it reads smoothly."

## **A Reporter is not a mere automation.**

Go where you like, read the opinion of experts (and I can say that I have seen a good deal either in the stenographic press or in documents and books on the subject of shorthand), and I have never found anywhere, except in Dr. Zeibig, a practical stenographer who contended that in the matter of a speech, the shorthand writer was to act as a mere machine, *e. g.*, like a phonograph. Of course, occasionally one will meet with a young hand who, boasting of his two-hundred-words-a-minute ability, will tell you that he has done this kind of work to the satisfaction of the speaker ; but who believes him ? No ; a stenographer must not be a mere automaton—a mere machine ; he has a much higher duty to accomplish,—a duty which gives a brightness to his profession that would be wanting if it was misunderstood or forgotten. A stenographer worthy of that name looks to a higher conception of his art ; he must not be what is described by Mr. Prévost, a great French authority on the matter, quoted by Dr. Zeibig in his paper, when he writes :

\* \* \* \*

[I will sum up by warning the stenographer whose work cannot be controlled by the speaker, that he must undertake it only with the greatest devotedness toward him whose fellow laborer he necessarily becomes. With ill-will, prejudice, or a narrow-mindedness, the translator may become false by too much accuracy, inaccurate by following too slavishly the text, bring ridicule on the eloquent man, above all on the one whom passion animates, possesses, dignifies, dominates,—the real, the great, the only orator.]

The best shorthand notes can acquire all their value best by the judgment brought to bear on their arrangement. Nothing, therefore,

is more dangerous than the collaboration of a thorough-bred stenographer, of a clever word-catcher, of one of those too-numerous workers who, infatuated with their little ability, overlook stupidly the authority of artists who guide them, and who strive to do honor to, and elevate, their common calling.]\*

I have rarely read a picture of the photographer, or would-be stenographer more sarcastic, more ironical, than the one contained in those few lines, or, at the same time, one more truthfully realistic. Those "word-catchers" (*attrapeurs de mots*), as Mr. Prévost called them, do a great deal of harm to the profession in leading the public, unfamiliar with its real requirements, to believe that it does not amount to much, after all, since it is purely a question of rapidity, not of intelligence, not of good, sound judgment enlightened by a first-class education—as I will, in a few moments, show to be the case,—but merely of automatical dexterity.

It seems to me useless to attempt to say, in plainer words, after what precedes, that I am in favour of the opinion prevailing universally among experts and public men of every country, that a revision *must* be made by the stenographer, in the transcription of his notes, both for the sake of the speaker's own reputation and in the reporter's own interest; because if he dared once to indulge in the "photograph" business, in absolute literalness, while transcribing his notes, he would soon learn what a blunder he had committed, and would cease to be in a position to try it again, because he would be very quickly turned out of work.

## How far revision or rearrangement permissible in the transcription of shorthand notes.

The question remains, how far that correction or revision, as you will like to call it, should go? What limits should the shorthand writer ascribe to himself in that delicate and, I may say, dangerous task? I shall examine that point as a conclusion to the pre-

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\* (Translation of the French Text.)

sent paper. I shall proceed by quoting the opinions of experts in different countries who have had a long and practical experience. In the extracts that follow will be found also, as a matter of course, an answer to the question above discussed, whether there must be a revision or rearrangement, or not, in the transcription of shorthand notes. As both are intimately connected, I cannot choose my quotations on one point without including what has been said on the other. I am aware that it will give a little more expansion to the present paper than it should have, because I have already given a good many authorities on the first point. I do not regret it, however, for it will amount fully to a verdict of an international jury composed of the very best men ; men having all the knowledge necessary to give an opinion deserving the highest respect, because it carries with it the best possible authority—that of learning and practical experience. As for the question of the limits of the revision by the shorthand writer, I feel that, in giving the opinion of those who have had a long experience, I am fulfilling my duty in a far better way than by giving simply my own humble judgment.

### **The Reporter's transcript must be subjected to a discreet Expurgation.**

Dr. Zeibig has quoted Mr. Hyppolite Prévost's opinion ; but as he has not thought proper to give the whole of it, I will complete what is missing by a fuller extract, in order to fully present the views of such an eminent authority. Mr. Prévost has been for a great many years chief of the stenographic service of the French Houses of Parliament, and, as such, has acquired great experience :—

\* \* \* \*

[Now, I suppose the translator in presence of an absolutely accurate stenography. Can he, without damaging the reputation, the honor, the good standing, of the speaker, reproduce it word for word and give it out in such a form to be printed? Very seldom will this occur, and only as an exceptional case. As we have already stated, oratorical utterances, as a general rule, above all, the real and

loyal extemporization, are incompatible with a slavishly literal transcription. It is therefore necessary to submit the shorthand translation to a discreet but unceasing work of expurgation. This work usually consists in reconstructing a sentence with, as much as possible, its original elements, but distributed in a better way, in order that, thanks to its correctness, its easy style, the traces of the numerous changes made in the speeches as delivered, which form the new version, cannot even be detected by the hearers nor by the author.

This is not all. To succeed in this delicate task, where one in duty bound must take good care to conceal his corrections, as well as the full responsibility of taking the initiative in so doing, the shorthand editor must feel that he possesses the special qualifications for this work. The sole object that he must have in view is, to make the reading of the speech as easy as has been the hearing of it, and that the reader shall feel the emotions and the impressions of the assembly, who heard the speech. That is all; true, the task, as above shown, involves many difficulties. One cannot lay down precise rules to the enlightened taste which alone must guide one in the work of transforming a spoken language into a written one.]

### **In purging literal translation of parasitical phrases, &c., the Reporter must preserve the individual peculiarity of each speaker.**

The very same idea is expressed by Mr. Reed in the extracts given in this paper. Those two great authorities, French and English, have met and agreed absolutely on the same point,—that is to say, on the necessity of the stenographer's rearrangement of the shorthand transcription. And further on, Mr. Prévost adds :—

\* \* \* \*

[The stenographer who comprehends his mission in its highest sense could not bestow too much care upon that part of it which consists, while entirely in preserving the individual peculiarities of each speaker, in purging his literal translation of parasitical clauses,

phrases and words, in effecting a suppression or modification of those insufficient forms of speech, by reason of which the thought of the real extemporizer is always expressed more or less laboriously before attaining to an exact expression ; in abbreviating, in clarifying the form, often diffuse and scattered ; in realizing, in bringing about, in short, with prudence and reserve, that grammatical and literary revision, within certain limits, which is a work of taste and judgment, and whose greatest merit is precisely to conceal its traces to the reader, and to the speaker himself.]

[The stenographer who overlooks this point of view, has certainly not thought seriously of the exigencies of his profession. He has not been struck, as he should have been, by the essential differences that exist between the style spoken and the written one,—differences which must, as much as possible, disappear in the transcription. The faithfulness of such a stenographer would be cruel, it would annoy the reader as well as the speaker. There would be no translation, but a treachery : *traduttore, traditore*. His stenography, absolutely accurate, would be no more a reflection of the speech, it would be an exaggerated representation of it,—in fact a caricature ; for the speech which would have pleased, convinced, won over the hearer, would shock, worry and annoy the reader.]

Mr. Emilio Inzaurraga, whose views I am about to give, began the study of shorthand in 1856. Born in Uruguay, he went to Buenos-Ayres, Argentine Republic, in 1858, where he contributed very largely to the establishment of the official stenographic bureau of that country. He devoted, I may say, his whole life to that profession, either as a parliamentary practitioner or as a professor. It is useless for me to add, that his opinion must be considered as having a great authority in the matter. Here is what he said, in a very able paper on shorthand addressed to and read before the Paris International Shorthand Congress of 1889 :—

## **Limits of liberty to be taken by the Reporter in Parliamentary Debates.**

[Much more limited is the liberty to be taken by the parliamentary shorthand writers who have to reproduce entirely and faithfully all that is said in the speeches. Be they good or bad, correct or incorrect, long or short, the shorthand writers must reproduce them with the utmost faithfulness. It is in this task that are to be frequently met many difficulties for those unfortunate photographers of the speech who have the ill-luck to be obliged to turn out a good proof with an original imperfect in many points.

How can one correct these imperfections without, in the opinion of the speaker himself and of those who heard him deliver his speech, spoiling the resemblance?

How far can the exercise of the right of correcting be used by the shorthand writer?

Can he act arbitrarily? In no way can he do that. He must bear in mind the numerous circumstances which might contribute, according to the nature of the case, to limit that liberty and prevent it from becoming a grave defect which would deprecate the work of the practitioner instead of making it better.

Varied are the difficulties that face the shorthand writer, and very uncertain is the road that he has to travel from the beginning to the end of his career.

Generally speaking, men are born with the gift of speech, and nevertheless, there are many individuals who, although very competent to handle the questions submitted to their appreciation, and who, although having filled a brilliant career as writers and publicists in the country which they represent, are not gifted to occupy an important position as speakers.

Their celebrity and their talent as writers, their well-deserved fame as literary men, forbid the public from believing that their



oratorical productions may be imperfect or incomplete ; but as there is a vast difference between the speech and the written production, it so happens that the words used are not always the fittest to convey their thoughts.

A publicist, a statesman, a scholar, enjoys a well-deserved reputation on account of his elegant style and by his writings, which his colleagues and the public never get tired of reading. The shorthand writer, or rather the photographer, who would make a photograph of the man quite different from the one generally known, would, in reality, deserve to be pitied.]

### **A Reporter should be an intelligent interpreter.**

Speaking of Mr. Jean-Baptiste Joseph Breton, whose brilliant career began on the 10th of August, 1792, when representative government was established in France, Mr. Inzaurraga adds this :—

\* \* \* \*

[This indefatigable worker on the history of the French parliament and courts of justice, has been for thirty-four years shorthand writer for the *Moniteur*, *Journal des Debats*, and the *Gazette des Tribunaux*, and neither the speakers nor the judges have ever made any complaint whatever for inaccuracy in the numerous speeches he published *in extenso*, although he corrected, as he knew how to do it, the many imperfections to be found in the extemporization.

Thus one sees that Mr. Breton was not only an expert mechanical stenographer, but also an intelligent interpreter who used for the benefit of his brilliant career his literary training, employing his tact, his discernment and his judgment to divide the good seed from the chaff, which ought to be entirely preserved from what was required to be changed in the speeches he published with the approval of the speakers. There lies the great merit of a good stenographer.

This remarkable instance I have never forgotten, and I declare that no advice has been so beneficial to me in the exercise of my profession.]

Those are the words deliberately written by the *doyen* of the stenographers of the Argentine Republic.

Those views are also entertained by a younger man, though of considerable experience and ability, who is now chief of the stenographic service of the Senate of the same country, Mr. Angel Menchaca. Here is what he said to the Paris Congress :

[Many believe the task of the stenographer to be purely a material and mechanical one ; that he is a mere machine, taking automatically the words of the speaker. Those who entertain that opinion are very far from having an idea of the amount of intelligence a stenographer must possess to be able to discharge his duties thoroughly.

Swiftness and clearness, which are two of the leading objects of the shorthand art, cannot act together in a way to match the torrent of words spoken ; hence, a material insufficiency, which the shorthand writer must supply, either by a great hand expertness, the result of natural qualities, or by a strong intellectual preparation.

I know fully well that an extempore speech is quite different from a written one ; between the two there exists the same difference as between the hearing and reading ; the sense of hearing is much more indulgent than the sight. How disappointed one would be who, charmed with a speech he had heard, should read it afterward, reproduced with the utmost accuracy and, also, with the most despairing faithfulness ! For, then, the personality of the speaker having disappeared, the speech is but a body without a soul, deprived of the music of the voice and of the speaker's gesticulations, which marked his thought and gave it relief.

Therefore, the intelligent shorthand writer must not give a transcription literally exact ; he must try to take away the imperfections and repetitions,—above all, when it is an extemporization. If

not so, the absolute accuracy of the stenographer would become cruel, and would annoy the speaker as well as the reader ; it would no longer be a translation, but a "treason," as Prévost says.]

## **A class of speakers whose speeches call for a very skilful Editing by the Reporter.**

[There are speakers, of course very few in number, so extremely concise, who never express but a part of their ideas, and claim to complete their meaning by more or less suggestive gesticulations ; the shorthand writer who cannot reproduce this latter part of the speech, finds himself in the position of Fabius de Moratin, and is obliged to content himself with fragments of sentences taken down, which he will have to arrange and complete later on. This kind of speakers are the worst of all, for they require a real interpretation ;—complete sentences often have to be added to the speech as delivered, and in doing that, great care must be taken to imitate the speaker's style, in order to conceal this work of revision.

There are other speakers, their number is the largest, who are diffuse, who repeat the same thing over and over as if they were speaking to a post, and who come back twenty times on the same point. The shorthand writer must then clear up things ; bring together the scattered ideas, suppress repetitions, common-place ideas, pick out, amongst those already sapless, the few branches where sap is still to be found ; give a good and clear form to that part of the speech that must be preserved. With this kind of speakers, one must, without mercy, suppress all that is obscure and unimportant.

But the speaker must never suspect the existence of the shorthand writer's corrections ; for if he does, he may think that the changes so made are better than what he said, and then his self-love will suffer thereby, or he may be of opinion that they are out of place—which is very often the case, for those fathers have a great love for their children, however deformed they may be, and he will

tell his colleagues and friends : "The shorthand writers have disfigured my speech ; from a remarkable work, they have made a caricature." It must be borne in mind that he is the best artist who succeeds in concealing his art. It is but very seldom that a shorthand writer will receive the thanks of a speaker who is satisfied with the style in which his speech appears.

As to the literal transcription, it never gives them satisfaction. They are, so far as that is concerned, like the fair sex, who always bitterly complain against photographers. Women claim to be always young and pretty, and, as LaBruyere says : "The coquette forgets that the face reveals the age." Many speakers seem really to ignore that the value of their intelligence is to be found in their speeches ; for it is not in vain that Buffon has said : "Manners make the gentleman." ( "*Le style c'est l'homme.*" ) ]

### **A speech must be cleared of all redundancies without weakening the idea or distorting the style of the speaker.**

[There are shorthand writers who claim that the reproduction of speeches must be absolutely accurate and textual, and that speakers must be made accountable for all imperfections in the phraseology, and grave mistakes. There are others, on the contrary, who think that one must change, with the greatest care, the phraseology when defective, and give the ideas a logical course, left unfinished in the extemporization.]

I have already said a few words on this subject. I believe that the one is as unacceptable as the other, for both are equally remote from the just medium. It is indispensable to make, in the transcription of any speech, certain corrections of mere form,—which consist in suppressing repetitions, rounding the sentences, making clear what is diffuse, but without weakening the idea or distorting the peculiar style of each speaker, in order that it may not be the

shorthand writer who speaks, but the speaker, and one may make the distinction between a farmer and a poet, a physician and an economist, an over excited lawyer and a politician and a thoughtful philosopher.]

Mr. L. P. Guenin is a "sténographe reviseur" of the French Senate, a man of great practical experience, the author of many valuable works on shorthand. He has published a revised edition of the "Aimé-Paris" system. That is the system I write. It has been very successfully adapted to several foreign languages, and I am now working to make an adaptation of that system to the English, for my own private use. Mr. Guenin is an old practitioner, and very well conversant with all matters connected with our profession. His professional standing is such a prominent one that he was chosen as vice-president of the Paris Congress. Interested in the task of presenting a study on the subject of writing-machines—the phonograph, etc., he acquitted himself most creditably. In the course of that study, speaking of the possible use of the phonograph, he gave his views on the mission of the stenographer in the following explicit terms :—

\* \* \* \*

[As to parliamentary bodies, is there a reader silly enough to believe for one moment that he has before him the report of the sitting absolutely as it happened, with the interruptions, private conversations often heard a good deal more than the speaker's utterances, repetitions of the latter, his fruitless efforts to find out the idea he wishes to express, the noise in the lobbies and around the tribune? Is it possible that one cannot see that, from such a confusion, there is an intelligent labor performed on the very spot by the stenographer, which labor consists in putting aside all useless sounds, every thing that does not belong to the subject debated, and in taking down only what is the text to be reproduced? There exists a first selection absolutely necessary, which many hearers can not make, and which causes the sittings to appear to them as the very essence of confusion.

Is it possible to dispense with that labor, even with the most perfect phonographs to be invented ?

But we are only at the beginning of the stenographer's work. The text of the debates is separated from all the sounds not belonging to the discussion :—can it be published in that form ? This would simply mean to throw ridicule on the assemblies and speakers.

A second and intelligent work is then made by the stenographer, by omitting these repetitions and imperfections, which escaped the attention of the hearer and would render intolerable the reading of the report.

In the next place comes a third revision that requires a larger instruction and special knowledge coupled with a real talent of assimilation ; it is the revision of speeches by the speakers themselves, - and after them, or in their stead, and at their request, by the revising stenographer. Is it mean to deny to the speakers the right to revise, if need be, the phraseology of their speeches ? To change words which, in the heat of the extemporization, have inaccurately or incompletely conveyed their meaning ?

We are far away from the phonograph and from the mechanical reproduction of a sitting. If it was wanted, it would be easy for us to give out such a report, without any such machine. We are sure that nobody would like to have a second trial.]

**The higher the qualifications and the duties  
of the shorthand profession, the higher  
will it stand in the estimation of  
public opinion.**

[Indeed, it must not be supposed that, to be a good shorthand writer, it is sufficient to have certain qualities somewhat mechanical. Much wider qualifications are required.

Nobody will give a faithful report of a speaker's speech, whatever expertness he possesses, or whatever be the delicacy of his hearing, if his intelligence has not been trained to that work by serious studies, and if it does not quite make up the subject-matter, always hard to understand, and often of a technical character, which is debated.

We must add, that the duty of a shorthand writer does not wholly consist of the literal and, so to say, material reproduction of all the sounds which, in the course of a more or less extensive extemporization, have reached his ear. Although literality must be the chief merit of his work, under his pen must disappear certain imperfections of language, certain repetitions of words ; sometimes sentences have to be completed, by adding one or several words left out by the speaker. How could a shorthand writer be in a position to accomplish that delicate task, if he had not beforehand a personal knowledge of the questions which are discussed ]

Every one who has an ordinary knowledge of the various requirements of shorthand work, knows also how good an education must be possessed by the stenographer to enter upon official duties, in all the different countries of Europe and America. Professor Zeibig himself quotes the regulations of several countries where, in the average, the shorthand writers must prove that they are graduates from high schools, or have attended high schools ; they must, in other cases, be shown to have had a scientific parliamentary training. Most members of the Stenographic Bureau of the Hungarian Parliament are doctors at law. In Saxony they must have obtained a degree of doctor of philosophy, or doctor at law. In France, they must be Bachelors of Arts. In Italy, they must have obtained an academical license, at least, and must have a knowledge of the French language.

These conditions are required, not because the stenographer is expected to give all the words uttered like a mere automatic machine,—as the phonograph, for instance, could do far better than

any human being,—but because he is expected to possess an intelligence highly cultivated, so that he shall be able to discharge his duties in a manner to bring credit upon himself and the parliament of which he is a devoted as well as an intelligent servant, or of the various public speakers he is called upon to report, as the case may be.

The higher you raise the qualifications and the duties of the shorthand profession, the higher will it stand in the estimation of public opinion, and the higher, too, will be the respect of the public for the gentlemen who devote their life to what, after all, deserves to be called the public good. This reminds me of a significant incident that took place almost twenty years ago, in a Committee of the Canadian House of Commons.

\* \* \* \*

An inquiry was going on before that committee on a very important matter connected with public business; and, of course, the evidence was taken down by shorthand. It appears that some difficulty arose about the allowance to be given to the stenographers for their labor; and the matter having gone from bad to worse, the note-takers made a "strike," and wholly quitted work. The secretary of the committee was instructed to wire to Montreal, in order to have some shorthand writers to replace the strikers. New hands went up to Ottawa, but on being informed of the facts and circumstances of the case, they refused also to work; evincing, by the way, a remarkable *esprit de corps*, which one would be so happy to find always and everywhere. The members of the committee felt themselves rather in a bad fix, and assembled to talk the matter over.

In the course of their deliberations, one member remarked: "Why! thirty dollars an hour for the stenographers! that is a very big price. [Of course it included also the transcription] I think I will resign as member, to become a shorthand writer; that would pay me much better." Thereupon Mr. Blake,—then one of the foremost leaders of the Liberal party in Canada, and now a member of the



British House of Commons,—quickly retorted: “Yes, my friend, you can do that, but you must not forget that any man can be a member, whilst any member cannot be a good reporter.”

It was a timely warning. The member did not resign.\*

## **Class and character of Shorthand Reporters in Crown Prosecutions.**

Mr. O'Brien, M.P., and Mr. Gilhooly, M.P., were charged with conspiracy arising out of speeches made by them at a meeting in Clonakilty on 30th June 1889 and tried before magistrates, J. B. Irwin, R.M., and Colonel Caddell, R.M.,—The charges were:—

1. That you, the defendants, on the 30th June, 1889, at Clonakilty, in the county of Cork, being a proclaimed district under the provisions of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887, did together, and with other person and persons whose names are unknown, unlawfully take part in a criminal conspiracy punishable by law at the time of the passing of the said Act, to wit, to induce tenants of farms on the estate of Arthur Hugh Smith-Barry, in the county of Cork, not to fulfil their legal obligations, to wit, to refuse to pay to the owner of such farms the rents which they were lawfully bound to pay.

2. That you, the said defendants, on the said 30th day of June, at Clonakilty aforesaid, did unlawfully take part in an unlawful assembly with intent to unlawfully intimidate the said Arthur Hugh Smith-Barry, with a view to cause him to abstain from acting as one of a syndicate of purchasers of the lands known as the Ponsonby estate, and while so assembled did for the purpose aforesaid incite certain persons, to wit, tenants of the said Arthur Hugh Smith-Barry, to refuse to pay him the rents which were or might become due to him by the said tenants.

3. That you, the said defendants, on the said 30th June, at Clonakilty, did unlawfully use intimidation towards the said Arthur

\* Here ends the paper by M. Alphonse Desjardins, commencing at page 170.

Hugh Smith-Barry, with a view to cause him to abstain from acting as one of a syndicate of purchasers of the lands known as the Ponsonby estate.

In support of these charges a policeman named Garvey was produced, who represented himself as a shorthand writer, and produced the report of Mr. O'Brien's and Mr. Gilhooly's speeches, which he stated he had taken at the meeting. It soon became apparent from cross-examination by the defendants themselves, who were not represented, that the report in question was copied verbatim from a report in the *Cork Examiner*.

The defendants then secured the attendance of counsel in order to expose the class of evidence upon which the political opponents of the Government are imprisoned in Ireland.

Mr. Harrington (who appeared for Mr. O'Brien) said he proposed to test the witness's competency, and asked him to prepare his book and pencil. The witness made no attempt to do so.

Mr. Harrington (to witness)--Have you got your pencil? I am going to read for you.

Witness (to magistrates)--Am I to take notes?

Mr. Harrington--You are to take notes. What are you for but to take notes?

Witness--He is going to test me, your worship.

Mr. Harrington--Are you afraid of being tested?

Witness--No, but I am rather nervous to write (laughter).

A lady in court laughed outright. Colonel Caddell glanced at her, and said if she repeated the indiscretion she should be removed from court.

Mr. Irwin--This man has been already tested.

Mr. Harrington—Not by me, nor with regard to Mr. O'Brien's speech. (To witness)—You have now a nice note-book in your hand—a nicer one than you had at the meeting.

Mr. Ryan, Q. C. (who appeared for the Crown), remarked that the observation was most improper, as the witness had sworn that the note-book in his hand was that used at the meeting.

Mr. Harrington thought Mr. Ryan should not endeavour to shield the witness.

Mr. Ryan denied having any such intention.

Mr. Irwin— I don't think it is fair to put the witness to a very severe test.

Mr. Harrington said he would not put him to a severe test.

Mr. Irwin— 'Test him reasonably.

Mr. Harrington— I will test him fairly.

Mr. Harrington said Mr. O'Brien was a rapid speaker, and any person who pretended to have taken a note of his speech in the first person ought not to be afraid of the test which he was about to apply.

Witness—Mr. O'Brien did not speak quick on this day (laughter).

Mr. Harrington—He spoke slowly specially for your sake. Come, now, get your pencil and note-book, or tell the court you won't do so, and get committed for contempt. (To the magistrates)—If your worships think I am submitting him to an unfair test I will ask you to tell me so.

Mr. Harrington then read in measured and distinct tone the following passage. It contains 127 words, and Mr. Harrington read it in 70 seconds. The witness attempted to take a note of it sitting in the witness chair. (He was standing at the meeting

of June 30th):—"I have no desire to say anything against the baroness or anyone else in the case, but many of her statements are untrue, and her story as a whole is misleading. She says she received no despatch until Wednesday night or Thursday morning, and leaves the impression that then one came only from Mrs. Maybrick. I telegraphed her on Tuesday morning to come, and would have telegraphed earlier if I could have learnt her address. Between Tuesday and Saturday when she came I telegraphed repeatedly. Instead of accosting her abruptly and gruffly at the station I simply said when I had recognised her, which I did with some difficulty, for I had seen her but once or twice in my life, 'This is a very sad affair.'"

At the conclusion of the reading,

Colonel Caddell remarked 40 seconds, 127 words.

Mr. Harrington said the time was 70 seconds and not 40.

Mr. Irwin agreed with Mr. Harrington, whose reckoning also corresponded with that of the reporters.

Mr. Harrington—120 words a minute is the test for a competent shorthand writer.

The witness then proceeded to the barristers' table to "transcribe" his note. After five minutes had elapsed,

Mr. Harrington remarked to him "If you cannot transcribe inform the court that you cannot."

After the witness had been twelve minutes at work, and gave no sign of having his transcript concluded,

Mr. Harrington said it was only fair to inform the witness that they intended also to apply the test of time. He intended to show that no reporter, however competent, could have transcribed the notes in the time stated by the witness.

Three minutes later,

Witness remarked there were a few words which he could not make out.

Almost immediately afterwards he said he finished.

A discussion then took place as to whether or not the transcript should be entered on the depositions.

Mr. Ryan contended that if anything irrelevant was entered on the depositions, the superior court might quash a conviction if it were proved that the prosecuting counsel agreed to this evidence being admitted on the deposition.

Mr. Harrington said that in case the prosecution was reviewed before a superior court, the evidence of the transcript would be useless if not entered on the deposition. If the case did not come before the superior court for a year the witness would have that time during which to exercise the practice of shorthand.

Mr. Shinkwin said if the matter was evidence it should be taken down. Was it evidence or was it not?

Mr. Irwin—I think it is necessary we should have a record of the test.

Mr. Ryan—Then it must go on the deposition. But take a note of my objection.

The bench assented.

Witness read the following transcript, which was entered on his deposition:—"I have no desire to say anything against the baroness, but her statements are untrue, and her story is she says she received--and came to telegraph on Tuesday evening—to go and learn her address—instead of accosting her—I have many—I simply sent for her—I have seen her once in my life."

Witness said—I think that is all I have down.

Mr. Harrington then put in the copy of the *Examiner* containing the passage read to the witness.

Mr. Harrington asked witness had he heard the magistrates say the number of words read to him was 127.

Witness said he did not hear.

Mr. Harrington then asked him to count the number in the paragraph himself.

Witness did so, and said there were 127 words in it.

Mr. Harrington—How many of these words did you reproduce in your transcript ?

Witness—Sixty-one.

Did Mr. O'Brien speak as fast as I did ? I don't think so, because he emphasised every word.

Does that which you have written read sense ?

Mr. Ryan—I object.

Mr. Harrington—Am I not to place on the deposition the natural result of my test ?

Mr. Irwin— It is no evidence whatever.

Mr. Harrington—Suppose he said it had sense, it would be a good test of his veracity. That is the test I want to apply. You omitted 66 words out of 127 words. Will you show me 66 words omitted in the whole course of Mr. O'Brien's speech ? I don't know.

Will you undertake to swear there are ? I could not swear.

Although you were sitting down when you wrote the passage you omitted 66 words from 127, and you were in the middle of a surging crowd when you took Mr. O'Brien's speech ?

Witness said he was in near the platform.

Mr. Ryan then re-examined the witness as to whether he took down the words in a book at the meeting, and whether he got any assistance in transcription from reading the papers.

Mr. Harrington objected to these questions, as they were already on the deposition of the witness.

'The court allowed witness to answer. He replied—No.

Asked by Mr. Ryan if he had seen *United Ireland* of the 6th July, or the Monday morning following the meeting, which was July 1st, witness replied—I don't read that paper at all.

Mr. Harrington asked how could the witness or anybody else see a paper a week before it was published ?

Mr. Ryan (to witness)—I will ask you to write down for me in shorthand something I will read to you. I will read from the *Cork Herald*, and it is on the interesting question about re-opening the flax mills.

Mr. Harrington asked for the date.

Mr. Ryan—July the 1st. You need not be so suspicious.

Mr. Harrington—I don't suspect you, but I suspect the witness very much.

Mr. Ryan—I have just taken this paper up, and I have never seen this copy in my life before.

Mr. Harrington—It is only fair that we should have a newspaper read which the witness had not an opportunity of seeing before, and not to have a newspaper read which might have been in Mr. Sherlock's bag, and which the witness might have seen before.

Mr. Ryan said such reflections should not be made on Mr. Sherlock.

Mr. Harrington—Have you any objection to *United Ireland*?

Mr. Ryan—Not a bit (laughter).

A copy of that paper was then handed to Mr. Ryan across the table.

Mr. Ryan (to witness) —Now be as cool as possible. He then read the following passage—"But the landlord was unreasonable enough to be dissatisfied with the bare honour of having this sterling Protestant yeoman planted and flourishing on his land. He gave him a touch of an eviction-made-easy notice, from which, by an oversight, sterling Protestant yeomen were not exempt."

Colonel Caddell—Time, forty seconds.

Mr. Harrington—I have the passage down in longhand myself, Mr. Ryan (laughter).

Mr. Ryan— I can't take anything from you in a court of justice.

Mr. Harrington—I will read it for you.

Mr. Ryan (to witness)—Can you read that?

Witness remained about a minute mutely looking at his notes.

He then read—"But the landlords were--was unreasonable enough to be dissatisfied by having." He then stopped.

Mr. Ryan—Read it slowly.

The witness did not say anything.

Mr. Ryan—If you can (laughter). I don't know whether you can or not.

Witness (reading)—"But the landlord was unreasonable enough to be dissatisfied"—



Mr. Ryan—Well ?

Witness—"By having sterling Protestant young man clergy-man"—

Mr. Ryan—Yes ?

Witness (after a long pause) addressing the Petty Sessions Clerk, said—I thought you were taking it down.

After another long pause he read on—"He gave him a touch of an eviction-made-easy notice."

Another long pause.

Witness (reading)—"For by an oversight"—(To the court)—That is all I have taken down. .

This closed the re-examination.

## **How a "Doctoring" and Partisan Reporter collapses under a searching cross- Examination.**

### **PROSECUTION OF MR HARRINGTON, M.P. AT MULLINGAR.**

On the 17th of December 1882, a meeting under the auspices of the Irish National League, was held at Mullingar, at which Mr. T. D. Sullivan, M.P., was invited to address his constituents. The meeting was large, representative, and perfectly orderly. It was presided over by Rev. L. Gaughran, Administrator of the town of Mullingar. Mr. Sullivan was accompanied to the meeting by Messrs. T. Harrington, hon. sec. of the Irish National League, and by Mr. Thomas Mayne, T. C., Dublin. About 20 Roman Catholic Clergymen were on the platform at the meeting. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Mayne, Mr. Harrington, Mr. Tuite, Chairman of the Town Commission, and others.

The following is a copy of the summons served on Mr. Harrington, charging him with having intimidated the farmers of Westmeath in his speech at Mullingar.

"COUNTY OF WESTMEATH, PETTY SESSIONS DISTRICT  
OF MULLINGAR

"The Queen, complainant, Timothy Harrington, of Tralee, county Kerry, defendant.

"Whereas a complaint has been made to me that you, the defendant, Timothy Harrington, on the 17th day of December, 1882, at Mullingar, in the county of Westmeath, did wrongfully and without legal authority, use intimidation towards divers of Her Majesty's subjects—viz, divers farmers residing in the co. Westmeath, with a view to cause them to do certain acts of which they had a legal right to abstain from doing—that is to say, to employ divers labourers and find work for them—and also, that you, the said Timothy Harrington, on the day and place aforesaid, did wrongfully without legal authority, use intimidation towards divers of Her Majesty's subjects—viz, divers farmers, residing in the said county of Westmeath, with a view to cause them to do certain acts which they had a legal right to abstain from doing, that is to say, to employ divers labourers at rates of wages which they were not bound to pay them, and also that you, the said Timothy Harrington, on the day and place aforesaid, did wrongfully and without legal authority incite other persons—viz, certain labourers and others residing in the county of Westmeath, to use intimidation towards divers of Her Majesty's subjects—viz, divers farmers, residing in the said county of Westmeath, with a view to cause them to do certain acts which they had a legal right to abstain from doing—that is to say, to employ divers labourers and find work for them, and to employ divers labourers at rates of wages which they were not bound to pay them. This is to command you, the said Mr Timothy Harrington, to appear as defendant on the hearing of the said complaint at the Special Petty Sessions Court, to be held in the Courthouse, Mullingar, in the county of Westmeath, on the 30th day of December, 1882, before such of Her Majesty's justices as shall be there at 12 o'clock noon on the day.

"Given under my hand at Mullingar, in the county of Westmeath, on the 21st day of December, 1882.

"(Signed,)

"E. A. JOHNSON, R. M.,

"Justice in the said county of Westmeath.

"To Mr. Timothy Harrington, of Tralee, county Kerry."

On the 30th, a special sessions under the Crimes Act, was held at Mullingar, to adjudicate in the case. The justices were Capt. R.M., Mullingar, and Mr. J. T. Dillon, R. M., Moate.

Mr. Harrington appeared, accompanied by Mr. T. D. Sullivan, M. P., and other friends.

Mr. J. Gerrard, B.L., instructed by Mr. Julian, Crown Solicitor, prosecuted.

Mr. Harrington conducted his own defence.

Mr. Gerrard, in opening the case, said he was in position to show that the words complained of were used by Timothy Harrington at said public meeting on the 17th of December, and occupied some time in delivering. One of the passages was as follows: "Now, I would ask the tenant-farmers to come forward generously and give the labourers a fair day's wages for a fair day's work. If not the agitation which has been carried on in their behalf will be directed against them if they do not come forward and assist the labourers now in their hour of need. He relied that that was a threat against the farmers of the county. They could plainly see it. If they did not the agitation would be directed against them. What agitation do they mean? He supposed it was the Land League whose course was marked by blood and outrage, outrages which shocked and appalled every one. Mr. Harrington by saying that told the farmers to employ the labourers, some of whom are now in distress. They should do so. They should give them a fair day's wages for a fair day's work, and they warranted if the wages were not given, wages which they considered reasonable, if the labourers were not employed, this terrible sword of agitation which has been wielded with such deadly force, would be used against them.

Acting-Constable Thomas Mathews of Moate was the first witness called. He deposed in answer to Mr. Gerrard—I am an acting-constable. I am stationed at Moate. I write shorthand and have experience in doing so. I have been in the habit of reporting speeches at public meetings. I have been examined as a witness in

the late State Trials as a shorthand writer. I attended a meeting held in Mullingar on Sunday, the 17th December. It was held opposite the National Bank in the Market square. The witness then proceeded to read Mr. Harrington's speech, when

Counsel asked Mr. Harrington would the witness read the transcript?

Mr. Harrington objected. Witness should read it from his shorthand notes. The following is his report (!) of the speech—  
 “Men of Westmeath, when I first came amongst you I did not think I was known here, but I heard a voice in the crowd welcome me back. I am proud to have the pleasure of addressing you with your noble patriotic representative, Mr. T. D. Sullivan. Eighteen months ago I had the pleasure of addressing a meeting in Mullingar. Since that time many changes have passed over Ireland. The country has passed through a great ordeal. We have had a Coercion Act, and we are here to-day to do and to dare as there never had been a Coercion Act passed for Ireland. A voice from the crowd—‘Bravo.’ Mr. Sullivan in his speech referred to Lord Derby. I may make a few remarks which I think Mr. Sullivan forgot to mention to you. Lord Derby himself is one of the greatest agitators in England. A greater agitator than any of our Irish representatives. He has got a seat in the Cabinet and has given over agitation. What we want is liberty to frame our own laws and settle our own affairs. Now, I ask the tenant-farmers to come forward generously and give the labourers a fair day's wages for a fair day's work. If not the agitation which has been carried on in their behalf will be turned against them if they do not come forward and assist the labourers now in the hour of need. A voice—‘They won't.’ Lord Derby does not care what becomes of the people of Ireland so long as they keep from troubling him and his government. Now, I heard since I came here, and I have been making inquiries, and I find that some of the farmers in this country are apathetic towards this movement. I asked the reason why they were so and I was told that in

Westmeath, the farmers were very comfortable and got reductions in their rents from 20 to 25 per cent. in their rents. Now, what we want is the farmers to stand by the labourers and give them, as I said before, a fair day's wages for an honest day's work. The leaders of the Irish people have been arrested under the Coercion Act and sent to jail. Here the witness paused for a long time, and eventually said he could not make out the next few words.

How many words cannot you make out?

Witness—Four.

Continues reading—And now we want the farmers to stand by the labourers and not be afraid, for in the words of the poet—

‘Far dearer the grave than the prison  
 Illum’d by one patriot’s name,  
 Than the trophies of all that have risen,  
 On liberty’s ruins to fame.’

I will not mind following up the programme by sending the people out of Ireland to a different country and leaving the land waste, save to fatten oxen for the English markets or remain in sheep walks. Lord Derby said it would pay the Government better to open public works and give the poor people employment. Before I retire I want you to form a branch of the Irish National League in Mullingar, and by doing that you will assist your noble, patriotic leader, Charles Stewart Parnell. I want you to stand together, and by your moral support, assist each other.”

Witness—That is all I have taken.

Mr. Harrington here applied for an adjournment to enable him to examine the witness's transcript, and compare it with the witness's notes, and with the true report of his observations on the day in question. The transcript of the witness was different from his notes as just now read to the court, and it was a ridiculous report in

a few paragraphs of a speech which occupied nearly an hour in delivery although it purported to be a full report.

The bench refused an adjournment.

Mr. Harrington immediately proceeded to cross-examine the witness.

The following is abridged from the report of the *Westmeath Examiner* :—

The witness replied as follows :—I am a shorthand writer. I use Pitman's system. I have two and a half year's experience in shorthand writing. I was taught Pitman's system. I am not an amateur. I was taught in a private school. I am not a verbatim reporter. I cannot say how many words a minute I could write.

Can you write 70 words a minute ? I can't say.

Did you ever know that a reporter must write at the rate of 120 words a minute ? I heard so.

So that if he is competent you are half reporter ? I did not pretend to be a half reporter.

Mr. Harrington—Will you give me your note book ? No, I won't.

Oh, my friend you will have to give it. Others than you know shorthand ? I won't give it.

Mr. Harrington said—If you say I am not entitled to get the note-book I will leave the case as it is, and you can hurry me to prison as soon as you like.

Mr. Dillon—You can get it for your own perusal.

Mr. Harrington—Oh, certainly, that is all I require it for.

Mr. Harrington then got the book and without opening it handed it back to the witness and asked him to open it at his speech.

Mr. Gerrard—That is quite right.

Cross-examination continued—Did you write the name of Harrington in your note-book when standing on the platform? I did.

Was it written before or after my speech. Before it.

Mr. Harrington asked for the original transcript which he received. To Witness—Did you read your transcript when you had it written? I did not. Did you sign the transcript? I did. And you were sworn when you signed it? I was. I believed it was true. The speech was wanted in a hurry, and I had no time to read it.

Mr. Harrington said that was the way a man's liberty was taken away in a hurry.

Mr. T. D. Sullivan—Hear, hear.

Have you any reason to offer why you signed and swore as true what you never read? I believed it was true, and it was wanted in a hurry. When was the transcript written? The day after the meeting. And you signed your name to the bottom of five pages without ever looking to see if it was true. I did. I believed it was true. Did you write the notes out? No, I did not. You did not write the transcript of your notes? No, I read them out to Sub-Constable Murphy and he wrote them. He put down what I told him. It was wanted in a hurry. It was written in Mullingar that day after the meeting. I cannot say why it was wanted in a hurry. Who told you to write it? The Head-Constable came to me and told me Captain Butler wanted it in a hurry. What was the report wanted for? I don't know. Had you any suspicion at the time it was wanted for official purposes? I had. Had you a suspicion it

would be used in evidence? I had. Still you did not read it? No, I did not. Are you aware that a speech is submitted to the Lord Lieutenant or Chief Secretary before a prosecution is instituted? I am not. I do not know the name of the magistrate before whom I made the Information as to the truth of the transcript. I believe it was Captain Johnston, R.M. I saw him on that day for the first time. I was sworn in Captain Butler's office. Captain Butler, R.M., was there. Captain Johnson was also there. Neither of them asked me if it was a true transcript of the speech. They did not ask me any question whatever in reference to it.

Mr. Harrington—That is an extraordinary way of putting a man on his oath.

Witness continuing--Sub-Constable Murphy was also present. He was not sworn. He wrote the transcript. They did not ask either me or Murphy any question with regard to the transcript. I handed it to Captain Butler. It was folded on the length when I handed it to him. I was perfectly sober at the time. I would remember if they asked me any questions. I went away after leaving it with him. When I handed it folded to him he opened it in my presence. I did not delay after handing it to him. "Thomas Mathews" at the end of each paper is my own signature. It was at the end of each page when I came with the transcript into Captain Butler's office. I did not read nor did I sign it in that office. I did not hand it in on the first time. There was a special demand for it. About half an hour afterwards I made the information in connection with it. There were present in the office at the time Captain Butler, Special R.M., Mr. Dillon, R.M.; Captain Johnson, R.M.; Mr. Jacques, Sub-Inspector, from Moate, now attached to Captain Butler; Sub-Constable Murphy, myself and Captain Butler's Private Secretary. He is not a policeman. I was then sworn by Captain Johnson. I did not then read the transcript but handed it in.

●  
So the law was represented by all those authorities, and yet you



were sworn as to the truth of a transcript which was not read for you? Yes. Did anyone at all read the transcript to you there? No, not one. Do you now swear it is a true copy of your notes? I do.

Mr. Harrington—Compare it with your notes.

Witness—There are a few words left out.

The witness was here cross-examined at great length on his short-hand notes, and admitted that they did not correspond with his transcript. He utterly failed to write on a piece of paper, handed him by the defendant, some of the short-hand characters. He got four attempts to write the letter “L” and failed. A copy of Pitman was handed to the bench, who compared the characters formed by witness with the letter “L” in Pitman, and took a note of his failure to make the letter.

Witness continued—I was told expressly to write out your speech; yours was the only speech delivered I was told to write out. I wrote the other speeches out since. I thought when I was giving the speech to Captain Butler it would come back to me to revise it.

Come back from where? I do not know. And why did you say “come back?” I meant come back from Captain Butler. Did you not well know it was going to the Castle? I thought so. I am supposed to write out a speech on which a prosecution is likely to hang immediately. And you, attending meetings and reporting public speeches, and knowing that a prosecution was likely to hang on my speech, did not write it out immediately? No, I did not write it out of my own notion; I was ordered to do it by Captain Butler; I did not see him at the meeting. The meeting terminated at seven minutes to four. I did not leave Mullingar that evening. During the Land League agitation I attended several meetings, and I always wrote out a speech on which a prosecution was able to hang, on the following day. I would write it out without being

asked. I belong to Moate station. I went there on Monday evening. I was summoned from there on Tuesday. I believe it was with a view to this prosecution.

Mr. Harrington then asked for the informations in the case which were handed to him, and were to the following effect :—

“The deposition of Thomas Mathews, Acting-Constable, Royal Irish Constabulary, who saith on his oath : I am at present stationed at Moate, in the county of Westmeath. I am a shorthand writer. I attended a public meeting held in Mullingar on the 17th of December. I could hear the speakers distinctly. I heard Timothy Harrington make a speech. I was about three yards from him whilst he was speaking. I took down his speech in shorthand——”

Mr. Harrington —On your oath did you take down my speech in shorthand ? I did not take the whole of it. Will you swear you took the quarter of it. No. Mr. Harrington here continued the reading of the deposition—“I took down his speech in shorthand and afterwards transcribed it——” Do you swear that ? Yes. Is that false ? Yes.

Mr. Dillon said he hoped Mr. Harrington was not trying to trap the witness ?

Mr. Harrington said he was not ; he was within his legal right and committing no offence by asking those questions. He asked witness did he take down the whole or even the quarter of his speech and he said he did not.

Witness continuing — I am not sure did I say “yes” to your last question.

Mr. Harrington having asked the magistrates did they recollect the answer.

Chairman—It is within the recollection of the court that the answer was “yes.”

**Witness**—I was in a hurry writing it and had to get someone to write it.

**Mr. Harrington**—And you were in a hurry swearing the information. Tell me who made it out? I suppose the clerk did. Did the clerk speak to you about writing out the information? No. And how did the clerk know what to put in it? Captain Butler made out a rough draft previously. Did you tell Captain Butler you wrote out the transcript? I did. Did you transcribe your notes? No. And you swear in your information that you wrote the transcript? Yes. And that the speech was correct? Yes. Is it correct? No, it is not. And therefore your statements are false? I suppose so.

**Mr. Harrington** resumed the reading of the informations—“Certain words used by the said Timothy Harrington in his speech and given in the transcript are marked in brackets by me” (to witness). So then, you read the transcript? I only looked at that particular portion. I did not read the whole of it over. On your oath did you put in these brackets? No, I did not. Who did? Captain Johnston put them in, and also indicated the place where they should be put.

**Mr. Harrington**—A sample of how justice is dealt out. Who told you about the intemperate words in my speech? No one did. Did you at the time of hearing them believe that a prosecution hung on them? I did. Do you know that the functions of a reporter prevent him from carrying his recollection so far as that? I do not. And you swear that the idea entered your mind when the words were spoken? I do. As you have stated that you are compelled to write out a speech in which a prosecution is liable to depend at once, why did you not write this out of your own motion? I would have done so.

**TUESDAY, 9TH JANUARY.**

**Mr. Harrington to witness**—You have been studying shorthand since? Yes.

Look at that note-book—is that the note-book you had on the platform on the day of the meeting? It is. Now, on your oath did you not write long hand notes on the platform. No, except some names. Are these the notes you wrote on the platform? They are. You see those words in long hand—“Honest T. D. Sullivan”—did you write them on the platform? No, it was afterwards.

Mr. Harrington—Now, I will ask you the question once more, and I would advise you to reflect well upon your answer, because I shall have an application to make to the court at the end of this trial which may affect you.

Mr. Gerrard—I object to this. This is intimidating the witness.

Mr. Harrington—Oh! everything is intimidating now-a-days.

To witness. Now, on your oath are these the *bona fide* notes that you took on the platform while I was speaking? No.

Mr. Harrington. Now, you see the effect of a little intimidation? Here are revelations.

On your oath did you not lead the Bench to believe that they were *bona fide* notes? I did not. I said they were notes of your speech.

How could they be unless they were notes taken while I was speaking? They were notes.

Now, did you not all day on the last day you were examined here state and lead the Bench to believe these were your *bona-fide* notes? I did not.

Mr. Harrington—Then I will have to appeal to the depositions and the recollection of the court.

Mr. Dillon—Oh! he certainly did.

Witness continuing—I wrote the transcript from both of these notes. I do not mean to say by that that I read one and then the

others, and then wrote from both. I wrote the transcripts from my notes and from my memory.

So that one was written whilst I was speaking and doctored afterwards? No, it was not doctored.

It was not doctored? No, it was not.

Mr. Gerrard objected to that question. The witness said before it was not doctored. Mr. Harrington should not be putting things like these into the witness's mouth.

Mr. Harrington—Well, we will try and elicit it in another way.

To witness—Did you alter your notes after the meeting? I did.

Mr. Harrington—Well, that is what I call doctoring.

Continuing—I was present at the writing of the transcript. I appended to my information a copy of the transcript of my notes.

Which of the notes was it written from? It was written from the notes taken whilst you were speaking and from what I remembered afterwards.

Before the transcript was written had you written the amended shorthand notes in your book? Yes. In writing my notes on the next day I called my memory into requisition. My memory is a particularly clear one.

Notwithstanding the fact that with four years' shorthand writing you cannot write the letter "L"? Yes, but I can write the letter "L."

Mr. Harrington—I thought you stated on the last day you could not write "L."

Mr. Gerrard—He said he could.

Mr. Harrington—He did not.

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\* The letter L in Phonographic alphabet is written thus ( ). It is one of the many curve alphabets in the system the slightest inaccuracy in its curvature leads to serious misreadings of shorthand notes in transcript.

Mr. Gerrard—Well, he can make it now.

Mr. Harrington—Please don't be interrupting me.

Mr. Gerrard—I will interrupt when I hear a wrong answer put into the witness's mouth.

Mr. Harrington—Your interruption will not avail to shelter him.

Mr. Gerrard—It is perfectly legal.

Mr. Harrington It is an answer on cross-examination, and I am entitled to have it down. He can explain afterwards. He said "yes," notwithstanding that he could not write the letter "L."

Mr. Gerrard— Well, this is not the law at all. You may first ask him can he make the letter "L" and then ask him can you now after your four years' experience make the letter "L."

Mr. Harrington I am not going to be dictated to by the Crown here at all as to how I will ask a question.

Mr. Gerrard—Such questions are merely a waste of time.

Mr. Harrington—It is you are wasting time not I.

Mr. Julian —It is noting less than wanting the man to swear falsely.

Cross-examination continued— I can make the letter "L." I could make it on the last day. I made it when I was asked to make it on the last day.

Mr. Harrington asked the court did he make the proper character for "L" on the last day ?

Chairman—We believe, and it is within our recollection that he did not.

To witness—Do you still swear you made the proper character for “L” when I asked you on that day? I think I did.

Witness, in compliance with a request of Mr. Harrington, again proceeded to make the letter “L” and handed down the character on paper.

Mr. Harrington—On your oath is that an “L” (pointing to the letter on the paper)? I believe it is not (laughter.)

And do you still swear you can make an “L”? I do; give me the paper and I will.

Is that character on the paper an “L” any way you stood to look at it? It is not.

Even if you stood on the top of your head?

Mr. Gorrard He has asked for the paper to make it.

Mr. Harrington—He has already made what he calls “L.”

After a pause Mr. Harrington asked—Do you now think you can make “L”? I do.

Witness then jotted down totally a different character from the previous one he had made.

To witness; Is it not a fact when writing out your report you curtailed your notes instead of lengthening them? It is.

So that the only exercise you made of your memory was to strike out some of your original notes? No, it was not.

Mr. Harrington to witness.—In the original notes you took on the platform did you write all the words to my speech? No, I did not. I used my memory in suppressing some of the words you used. I used my memory also in suppressing some of the sentences used by

you. I did not deliberately alter my notes. I altered them. I say again I did not deliberately alter them. I suppressed sentences and words. I do not know what influence, or was it spiritualism actuated me. I know what is meant by deliberation. I now say I deliberately altered my notes. When the transcript was written out, I had my notes before me. I dictated the transcript. It was the amended notes I had before me. I also referred to the original notes in the presence of Sub Constable Murphy. The amended notes are the ones I read for the bench on the last day.

You are positive it was the amended notes you read? Yes.

Mr. Harrington - Well read the original ones now.

Witness - I had no time to look over them for the last week.

Mr. Harrington - You will have to read them. You had no time to look over your own writing.

Witness - This book has been taken up from me for the last nine days, and a man cannot read shorthand without studying it. It is not like longhand writing.

Mr. Gerrard - I think we have spent long enough on the cross-examination of this witness. Let him read the particular passages from his original notes. I don't know how far it may correspond with the other.

Mr. Harrington - That would be all right if I wanted to shorten Mr. Gerrard's time and hurry myself into prison. I am not called upon to exercise my good nature in that way. I have been charged on a definite information. The witness swore he handed in the transcript. He swore that the words in it were the words used by me. I submit then, it is not with regard to the passage, but with regard to the whole speech that I am to examine him.

Mr. Dillon - If Mr. Gerrard travelled outside any particular paragraph you would be the first to oppose him.



Mr. Harrington—As Mr. Gerrard stated last day, and as you ruled with him, the object of the summons was to bring me into court. On the information rested the proving of the charge. When there was reference made to a certain speech in that information, surely I should be allowed to have it read. You, I hope, are not going to set up a different ruling to that now.

Mr. Dillon—I did not say that particular passage.

Mr. Gerrard—The only question is, do these words come within the Act? I have now listened to seven hours' cross-examination on this case without hearing anything extraordinary. It is for the court to exercise its discretion whether they will allow the further cross-examination or not. I hope the case is not going to go on interminably day after day, testing the shorthand writer as to what he did three years ago. I would suggest that you would not tolerate any irrelevant questions any more, but confine the witness to the pertinent issue.

Mr. Harrington—This is an extraordinary application to make, and to make against a man conducting his own defence. On cross-examination—I am not at all bound to confine myself to the question of the particular part of anything. Several passages were marked in brackets in the transcript he had received.

Mr. Dillon—There is only one passage marked in the one before us.

Mr. Harrington—There are several indicated here.

Chairman—We only see the one particular portion in ours.

Mr. Harrington—If the rest of my speech is a qualification of these words I think I am entitled to have it read, and not, as the Crown counsel stated, confine myself to a particular sentence and a particular issue. Mr. Gerrard in his statement of the case deliberately said he was proceeding on information with regard to a parti-

cular speech delivered by me. I, therefore, ask to have the original note of the meeting read over.

Mr. Gerrard—And I press my application at the end of over seven hours' cross-examination.

Mr. Harrington—In a court of justice and fair play, I should be let have from the witness his reading of his original notes. I would ask the bench did they believe the witness was reading from the original notes on the last day?

Chairman—I believed so.

Mr. Dillon—To-day was the first time we heard about the two notes at all.

Mr. Harrington—And I had to commence with a few blusters to get it out. I really think I am entitled to have the notes read. A considerable amount of interest is at present attached to this trial.

Mr. Gerrard—You have got enough of concession already.

Mr. Harrington—I consider I got no concession from any one here.

Chairman—The witness read the whole of the amended notes on the last day.

Mr. Harrington—He read for you what he led you to believe were his original notes. They are put in his information as his original notes, and he led me to believe they were the original ones. The evidence in this case may go much farther than this court, it may even be referred to in Parliament. You have witnessed the reading, or at least the attempt at reading, of his first notes, and I think I am now entitled to have the original notes read.

Chairman—You can have the original with regard to the part in brackets.

Mr. Harrington—I want the whole of it. The rest may be a qualification of that expression ; and by only taking the one sentence you will not be in a position to judge as to whether the words conveyed a threat or not.

Mr. Gerrard—If he says he can read it without waste of time I will not object.

Mr. Harrington—He has been treating me unfairly all through.

Chairman—Because you puzzled him.

Mr. Harrington—He puzzled himself by pretending he was a shorthand writer.

After some further argument, on the suggestion of Mr. Harrington, the witness was allowed time to study his notes. He sat at the witness table studying them during the remainder of the day, while the examination of the other witnesses proceeded.

### WEDNESDAY, 10TH.

Acting-Constable Mathews, who had been studying his shorthand notes during four hours on the previous day, was produced.

“Acting-Constable Mathews was then put into the box and presented with his note-book. He was requested to read from his original notes of the speech taken on the platform, and was obliged to confess that he was utterly unable to read them. He alleged that the book was soiled, and that he could not read his notes in consequence. The shorthand was easily obliterated.

“The bench examined the note-book at the defendant’s request, and expressed their opinion that the book was clean, and that there was no reason why he should not be able to read it.

“In reply to further questions the witness confessed to the magistrates that he could not read a word or a line in the original

notes. He could not find the passage which was bracketed in the transcript in his notes. He was utterly unable to find any line or catchword by which he could discover the passage.

"He was then directed to leave the box."

In the course of his address to the Court at the close of the case Mr. Harrington observed on the shorthand writer's evidence as follows :—

When the Crown set the case in motion they relied on the direction, he might say, given them from a shorthand writer present at the meeting. But the shorthand writer's evidence had been contradicted by the evidence of all the other witnesses. He hoped the result of the breakdown of Constable Mathews would be to teach him to give up the pretence of shorthand writing, and the Crown to employ competent men as shorthand writers.

\* \* \* \*

Mr. Gerrard in the course of his reply with reference to the shorthand writer's evidence observed :—

He did not think that Constable Mathews had made a mistake—that he purported to be a shorthand writer, when he was really a constable ; and he thought it was a pity he did not abandon the shorthand writing.

## **Partisanship in a reporter generates a bias which makes the report unreliable.**

Men of strong opinions are often good workers, but they are not always trustworthy reporters of what they see or hear. They are able to move others, because they are accustomed to concentrate their attention on some one aspect of a question, and can bring out unerringly all its good points if they are supporting it, or hold up to derision all its bad points if they are opposing it. They are usually

very blind to the defects of that which they advocate, and to the merits of that which they attack. This is the spirit of the partisan; and partisanship has a curious effect on the mind. Unconsciously a tendency grows up to seize on any little bit of an opponent's utterance that can be made to tell against him, and to ignore qualifying remarks that would give a different shade to the opponent's meaning.

How liable we all are to this unconscious bias, and how far-reaching its influence is upon our opinions, any reader of Mr. Herbert Spencer's "Study of Sociology" will not need to be reminded. The masterly manner in which bias after bias affecting our opinions on important subjects is traced in that book will drive conviction home to anybody to whom the idea comes as something new. Memory is treacherous, because it is always liable to the subtle influence of the bias that partisanship inevitably generates. This was recognized with all its force by the experienced Scotch editor who recommended Mr. Gladstone to have a shorthand writer in attendance on the visit of a deputation who desired him to espouse the cause of disestablishment in Scotland. Mr. Gladstone, more than any other public man of our time, could be readily misrepresented. His carefully framed sentences, weighing and balancing opposite views, his guarded parenthetical modifications of positive statements, his willingness to give a slight encouragement sometimes to an opinion to which he is not yet prepared to commit himself: all these things make it very easy indeed for a conscientious partisan to misrepresent him quite unintentionally. The readiness to read "between the lines," and to interpret every favorable observation as a partisan pronouncement, makes the mind an inaccurate recorder; and the zeal of those who believe their own cause to be righteous gives imperceptibly a coloring to facts and remarks that makes the latter convey much more than they were intended to convey. Knowing this, and being more keenly alive to the danger than the great statesman was, the wily editor suggested that a shorthand writer should be present, and Mr. Gladstone took his advice, with results that proved its wisdom. The mere fact that a shorthand writer was visibly present, helped to

impress upon members of the deputation the need for caution in their own statements of what occurred.

The same subtle influence of partisanship is seen in so many different ways. Witnesses for the plaintiff and for the defendant always give a version of facts that tends to support and corroborate their friends. Misstatements in the witness box are generally due to this cause alone, and not as cynics sometimes affirm to a widespread habit of perjury. And the influence of bias is fully recognized in the law court. Lord Justice Cotton, when he announced that the Court of Appeal would not allow the shorthand notes of a clerk to one of the solicitors in an action to be used in court, rested the decision on this very recognition. There was no suggestion of intentional dishonesty on the part of the clerk, but the judge considered it to be impossible for the clerk to avoid the unconscious bias of a wish that the evidence should turn out in a particular way. The principle is that the shorthand writer whose report is to be relied on by the court must not be a partisan—he must be absolutely impartial. The barrister may do his utmost to make one view of the facts prevail, although he, too, is expected not to say anything that would deliberately mislead the court, not to suppress facts that ought to be mentioned. But however much of a partisan he may be, he has an opponent who is equally determined to bring out the other view of the case, so that the court does get both aspects laid before it. The individual barrister may not be above suspicion—but the shorthand writer must be. He stands for accuracy; his business is not to promote this or that political cause, or this or that view of facts. He has to show things as they are, and his use of shorthand ought, therefore, to serve a high ethical purpose, in helping to draw attention to the importance of impartiality in the relator of incidents or the recorder of speeches. That the practice of shorthand reporting is a salutary mental training to the writer is tolerably obvious. But the service that it renders to society by counteracting the unconscious misrepresentation of the partisan is incalculable.—(*Phonetic Journal*.)

## **Reporting in third person calls for an exceptional intellectual training of the Reporter.**

The constant widening of the range of interests catered for by the newspaper press in recent times has led to a steady diminution in the number of first-person reports, and to an equally steady increase in the number of third-person reports. Far less space can be devoted nowadays than formerly to full reports of the public utterances of public men ; and although, as is well known, a "full" report is not necessarily a verbatim one in the sense of containing every word that the speaker uttered, yet a first person report does not permit of much condensation. But condensation is absolutely indispensable and on a very considerable scale, except as regards the speeches of Cabinet Ministers in a few of the London dailies, and a few local magnates in some of the provincial newspapers. Nearly all the public speeches delivered to-day when they receive notice from the press, receive it in the form of a summarized report in the third person.

One obvious corollary of this undeniable fact is that careful attention should be paid in the training of the reporter to the acquisition of a style of accurate third-person reporting. To the beginner it sounds very simple. Take the important parts of the speech : where the speaker said "I," write "he ;" where he said "will," write "would ;" where he said "my," write "his ;" in brief, always convert the present into the historic tense. In practice, this simple rule does not work satisfactorily. It covers a very little portion of the ground. "Will" and "shall" cannot invariably be transposed by "would" and "should" without misrepresenting the speaker's meaning. The orator's sentences are not all in the first person. Most speakers in the course of an address have occasion to refer to some one else, or to some other persons ; they refer to past events, and to persons who take part in them. They criticise the speeches, and attack or commend the opinions of other men. When a Liberal M.P., addressing his constituents concerning Lord Salisbury's conduct of Eastern affairs, says, "My policy is not his. His policy is that of

the great Continental Powers ; but our true policy is very different from theirs ;" let anyone try to give a third-person rendering of this by merely altering the pronouns and the verbs ! The effect will be to produce a string of unintelligible sentences. The danger is no imaginary one : it occurs every day. And reporters succumb to it every day. Here, for instance, is a sentence taken from a report in one of the leading London daily papers of Colonel Hay's speech on the unveiling of the Scott bust at Westminster Abbey : " His historical personages of the past were jostled in their recollections by their memories of the creations of Scott's imagination." The speaker said, " The historical personages of past centuries are jostled in our memories by the characters he has created." The inept transformation of " our " into " their " in this instance is as striking an illustration as could be supplied of the kind of pitfall that the young reporter should be on his guard against. There are others equally serious, but this is typical.

What is the cure ? It can be found only in that training which makes the mind alert and watchful for opportunities of ambiguity. Shorthand teachers can do something, especially when their course of instruction includes lessons in practical reporting. The associations can do something more. They can enlarge upon their customary speed practice by encouraging their members to enter upon the tasks of condensing, converting first-person speeches into third-person reports, summarizing letters, and otherwise employing themselves with operations needed not only in press work but in the commercial world as well. For the power to state briefly and with precision the effect of a conversation, the result of a discussion on some important business transaction, the views of a man whose advice has been sought, the purport of an opinion communicated verbally or in writing : this power is of value in every branch of life. We all of us have frequently to state in the third person things that we have heard in the first person, and we all need to be able to do it as well as the very best journalists can, and very much better than some journalists, who cannot be ranked among the best, are in the habit of doing it.—(*Phonetic Journal*.)



**A disclosure giving a very instructive lesson as to the manner in which wilful omissions are made from speeches of public men to bring them within penal laws.**

On 23rd September 1887, at Mitchelstown, County Cork, before *Magistrates* R. Eaton, R. M., and Captain Stokes, R. M., William O'Brien, M.P., was charged with inciting others to obstruct the sheriff in the discharge of his duty.

Mr. O'Brien's speech was delivered to his constituents, in Mitchelstown, on August 9th, 1887. The police, including Head-Constable O'Sullivan, the officer in charge of the town, were present at the meeting, but they took no notes of the speech, and saw nothing in it which they deemed it necessary to report, but on the morning following the meeting they were set in motion by orders from headquarters, and the head-constable directed a sergeant named Foley to write out his recollection of what Mr. O'Brien and other speakers had said, while he, at the same time, wrote out his own recollection. These two reports were forwarded to Captain Plunkett. When the case came to be heard, Foley was examined for the prosecution, and his notes produced, while his superior officer, O'Sullivan, was not examined, nor was any reference made to his report. This excited the suspicion of Mr. O'Brien's counsel, who, after having in vain demanded that the head-constable should be produced by the Crown, was forced to accept the responsibility of summoning him and putting him forward as his own witness. The result was a disclosure which should form a very instructive lesson to Englishmen as to the manner in which Crown prosecutions are conducted in this country against the political opponents of the Government. The witness was compelled to produce his transcript of Mr. O'Brien's speech, as it happened just then to be in his possession, and it was found that it contained two points of immense importance to Mr. O'Brien which were omitted in Foley's report. It represented Mr. O'Brien as ad-

vising the people, if an effort was made to put them out before the Land Bill passed, "to defend their homes by every *honest* means in their power." Foley omitted the word "*honest*." But, what was of still more importance, O'Sullivan's report represented Mr. O'Brien as saying—"He (Mr. O'Brien) was willing to test the Land Bill and give it a fair trial. Their cause was just. They were looking for only 20 per cent., and they would get more than that under the Land Bill." This was omitted in Foley's transcript offered in evidence.

Mr. Harrington, M.P., who defended Mr. O'Brien, on examining Head-Constable O'Sullivan's manuscript, discovered that it was cancelled by a pencil mark drawn down the face of the page, and that the words, "*Not to be used*," were written down the margin of the page. The following examination then took place (as reported in the *Freeman*) :—

"Mr. Harrington—What is the meaning of this sentence in the margin : '*Not to be used*' ? I cannot tell you.

"On your oath, can you explain that note, and tell in whose hand-writing it is ? I cannot tell.

"Can you form any opinion as to whose hand-writing it is ? I cannot say.

"Into whose hands did you give that document ? Into the hands of Captain Plunkett.

"Is that his hand-writing ? I can't say.

"Was that note on the margin when it came back from Captain Plunkett ? It was.

"From whom did you get it ? From Mr. Rice, Crown Solicitor.

"Mr. Harrington—It is not Mr. Rice's hand-writing ? Did it pass through the Castle ? It did."

## **How Lord Macaulay's speeches were mutilated by a shorthand writer.**

Unhappily an act, for which the law affords no redress, but which I have no hesitation in pronouncing to be a gross injury to me and a gross fraud on the public, has compelled me to do what I should never have done willingly. A bookseller, named Vizetelly, who seems to aspire to that sort of distinction which Curll enjoyed a hundred and twenty years ago, thought fit, without asking my consent, without even giving me any notice, to announce an edition of my Speeches, and was not ashamed to tell the world in his advertisement that he published them by special license. When the book appeared, I found that it contained fifty-six speeches, said to have been delivered by me in the House of Commons. Of these speeches a few were reprinted from reports which I had corrected for the Mirror of Parliament or the Parliamentary Debates, and were therefore, with the exception of some errors of the pen and the press, correctly given. The rest bear scarcely the faintest resemblance to the speeches which I really made. The substance of what I said is perpetually misrepresented. The connection of the arguments is altogether lost. Extravagant blunders are put into my mouth in almost every page. An editor who was not grossly ignorant would have perceived that no person to whom the House of Commons would listen could possibly have been guilty of such blunders. An editor who had the smallest regard for truth, or for the fame of the person whose speeches he had undertaken to publish, would have had recourse to the various sources of information which were readily accessible, and, by collating them, would have produced a book which would at least have contained no absolute nonsense. But I have unfortunately had an editor whose only object was to make a few pounds, and who was willing to sacrifice to that object my reputation and his own. He took the very worst report extant, compared it with no other report, removed no blemish however obvious or however ludicrous, gave to the world some hundreds of pages utterly contemptible both in matter and manner, and prefixed my name to

them. The least that he should have done was to consult the files of "The Times" newspaper. I have frequently done so, when I have noticed in his book any passage more than ordinarily absurd ; and I have almost invariably found that, in "The Times" newspaper, my meaning had been correctly reported, though often in words different from those which I had used.

I could fill a volume with instances of the injustice with which I have been treated. But I will confine myself to a single speech, the speech on the Dissenters' Chapels Bill. I have selected that speech, not because Mr. Vizetelly's version of that speech is worse than his versions of thirty or forty other speeches, but because I have before me a report of that speech which an honest and diligent editor would have thought it his first duty to consult. The report of which I speak was published by the Unitarian Dissenters, who were naturally desirous that there should be an accurate record of what had passed in a debate deeply interesting to them. It was not corrected by me : but it generally, though not uniformly, exhibits with fidelity the substance of what I said.

Mr. Vizetelly makes me say that the principle of our Statutes of Limitation was to be found in the legislation of the Mexicans and Peruvians. That is a matter about which, as I know nothing, I certainly said nothing. Neither in "The Times" nor in the Unitarian report is there anything about Mexico or Peru.

Mr. Vizetelly next makes me say that the principle of limitation is found "amongst the Pandects of the Benares." Did my editor believe that I uttered these words, and that the House of Commons listened patiently to them ? If he did, what must be thought of his understanding ? If he did not, was it the part of an honest man to publish such gibberish as mine ? The most charitable supposition, which I therefore gladly adopt, is that Mr. Vizetelly saw nothing absurd in the expression which he has attributed to me. The Benares he probably supposes to be some Oriental nation. What he

supposes their Pandects to be I shall not presume to guess. If he had examined "The Times," he would have found no trace of the passage. The reporter, probably, did not catch what I said, and, being more veracious than Mr. Vizetelly, did not choose to ascribe to me what I did not say. If Mr. Vizetelly had consulted the Unitarian report, he would have seen that I spoke of the Pundits of Benares ; and he might, without any very long or costly research, have learned where Benares is, and what a Pundit is.

Mr. Vizetelly then represents me as giving the House of Commons some very extraordinary information about both the Calvinistic and the Arminian Methodists. He makes me say that Whitfield held and taught that the connection between Church and State was sinful. Whitfield never held or taught any such thing ; nor was I so grossly ignorant of the life and character of that remarkable man as to impute to him a doctrine which he would have abhorred. Here again, both in "The Times" and in the Unitarian report, the substance of what I said is correctly given.

Mr. Vizetelly proceeds to put into my mouth a curious account of the polity of the Wesleyan Methodists. He makes me say that, after John Wesley's death, " the feeling in favour of the lay administration of the Sacrament became very strong and very general : a Conference was applied for, was constituted, and, after some discussion, it was determined that the request should be granted." Such folly could have been uttered only by a person profoundly ignorant of the history of Methodism. Certainly nothing of the sort was ever uttered by me ; and nothing of the sort will be found either in "The Times" or in the Unitarian report.

Mr. Vizetelly makes me say that the Great Charter recognises the principle of limitation, a thing which everybody who has read the Great Charter knows not to be true. He makes me give an utterly false history of Lord Nottingham's Occasional Conformity Bill. But I will not weary my readers by proceeding further. These

samples will probably be thought sufficient. They all lie within a compass of seven or eight pages. It will be observed that all the faults which I have pointed out are grave faults of substance. Slighter faults of substance are numerous. As to faults of syntax and of style, hardly one sentence in a hundred is free from them.

I cannot permit myself to be exhibited, in this ridiculous and degrading manner, for the profit of an unprincipled man.

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My delivery is, I believe, too rapid. Very able shorthand writers have sometimes complained that they could not follow me, and have contented themselves with setting down the substance of what I said.—(*Lord Macaulay's Preface to his Speeches as corrected by him.*)

## Reports of venomous speeches never made, supplied by designing reporters to congenial papers.

There were several spies in the pay of the Government in the Chartist agitation of 1839. They attended at the meetings of the Chartist Union, whose leaders were against physical force and sought the extension of the suffrage by moral means. These spies sent to congenial papers reports of venomous speeches which were never made, leading the public to regard the speakers as wild and dangerous insurgents. The *Morning Chronicle* was one of the papers open to these reporters. One morning a leader appeared saying—"If the ruffianly language held at the Snow Hill meeting on Friday night—language so foul, so flagitious [which was never uttered], that we reluctantly sullied our columns with expressions which reflect scandal upon an assembly of Englishmen, and are calculated to bring the privilege of free discussion itself into odium and disgrace—if such 'open and advised speaking' is to pass with impunity, then truly the law is a dead letter, and the Government deserves all the contempt with which it is assailed."

The *Morning Chronicle* described two meetings held at Farringdon Hall, Snow Hill, as "Chartist and Irish Confederate gatherings." They had been neither. They were called by the Co-operative League, a body bent more on social reform than political agitation. The meeting, on Friday night, stated to have been held at the "King's Arms" Tavern, Snow Hill, was held in Farringdon Hall, a building quite distinct from the tavern. It was stated that several of the Foot Guards were there. Only one was present, and he in undress uniform. Mr. Ewen was announced as chairman. The chairman was Mr. Youll. Mr. Walter, reported to have seconded the resolution, was Mr. Cooper; and an indecent expression attributed to Mr. Shorter was never uttered by him. It was stated, also, that the Co-operative League was under the auspices of Douglas Jerrold and William Howitt, who were never seen or heard of in connection with the body. These facts were made known at the time, but with little effect.—(*George Jacob Holyoake—Sixty years of an Agitator's life.*)

## Has reporting become more mechanical and less intellectual?

It has been said by some old journalists and others that reporting is now a lost art. I do not profess to agree with the criticism. There is as good reporting now as ever there was. In quantity there is far more. Indeed that fact seems to be the basis of the criticism. Reporting, it is said, has become more mechanical and less intellectual. Anybody can write shorthand; and the extension of newspapers has brought many "bodies" forward as reporters who can do little else than write shorthand. There is an old story of one of these verbatim men who had been sent to report a speech. When he came back, the editor asked him how much the speech would make in length. "Three columns," he replied. "But we have not room for three columns," said the editor, "and it is not worth so much. You must put it into a column and a half." "Very well," was the reply; "which half of it will you have?" Condensation

was for that man a lost art ; and so it is with many of the reporters of to-day. Mr. Pitman has destroyed them as thinking beings, and has made them into machines.\* There is a story of a great painter who, being asked with what medium he mixed his colours, replied, " With brains." So it is with good reporting : it is shorthand mixed with brains. Take half the reporters of the day and ask them when they come from a meeting what has been said. They can no more tell you without reference to their notes than they can fly. I have seen a reporter when he came out of the Gallery of the House of Commons put aside his notes and write a report of the speech he has heard without referring to them. It was not a verbatim report ; but it was infinitely better, and in one sense truer, than a verbatim report. Some of the best reporters I have known could not write a word of shorthand. Especially was that the case in the old days. Still there were as good shorthand writers then as now, only they were not machines. It is true there was not the same pressure then as now. A reporter might have days in which to produce his account of a meeting. Now he must have it ready in a few hours at furthest after the meeting is over—perhaps in a few minutes. Then he had no trouble with the electric telegraph ; now he has the operator waiting for him. Remembering all this, I am often surprised at the good work that is done.—(*Charles A. Cooper, Editor of the Scotsman.*)

## Faithful reporting of Thackeray's lectures on "The Four Georges."

Though in my early experience I met many men of distinction in their time, my memory of them is comparatively slight. One of them was Thackeray, and of my one interview with him I have a clear recollection. It was when he was delivering his lectures on "The Four Georges." As a reporter I went to the first of these lectures in Hull, and wrote a fairly long account of it. On the

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\* In this connection the opinion of the Editor of the *Phonetic Journal* at page 145, "The Modern Shorthand Reporter" will be read with advantage.



morning when the report appeared, a note from Thackeray was put into my hands at the office. In it he simply asked that the gentleman who had reported his lecture would call upon him. I was mightily proud of the invitation. I pictured to myself the interview, and thought of praises which would be given to me. I knew the report was accurate, as far as it went, and it did not enter into my mind that fault could be found with me. I went and was brought to Thackeray. He rose from his chair, and standing with his back to the fire beckoned me to a seat. Then the conversation began.

"Are you the young man who reported my lecture?" he asked.

"I am."

"Do you know, sir, that you have done your best to deprive me of my living?"

"No," said I, in sheer astonishment.

"You have," he said. "I make my living by delivering those lectures. If they are reported, no one will come to hear them, and I shall not be wanted."

"That view of the matter never occurred to me," I said somewhat nervously. "I had no other object than to let the general public who could not hear the lectures know what they were like."

"No doubt," he said; "but there are people who will be satisfied with your reports, and I shall be deprived of my just gains as a worker."

"Was the report good as far as it went?"

"Confound it, sir, that is what I complain of. If the report had not been good, I should not have cared. The public would have seen that it was rubbish that I could not have written."

"In that case," said I, "as I have not wronged you by incapacity or stupidity, you have nothing to complain of save my ignorance of your position. That ignorance is now removed, and of course, so far as I am concerned, I shall respect your wishes."

"Thank you. Is there any one else to be consulted?"

"Of course," I replied, "the editor may have views of his own, and I must do his bidding. But I have no doubt that when I tell him what you have said, he will not require the lectures to be further reported."

"Then you will tell him?"

"Yes, as soon as I see him."

"Thank you. Then that matter is at an end."

I was rising to go, when he said, "And now, young sir, what do you think of the lecture?"

"I thought it very clever," I replied, "but I thought you had used a great deal of cleverness in trying to hide a kindly heart under cover of cheap cynicism."

"Confound it," he said, "you are frank enough. What do you mean by cheap cynicism?"

"Well, I am scarcely prepared to answer that question off-hand."

"I think you should try to tell me what you mean. It sounds like harsh criticism!"

"Please remember, it is the criticism of a very young man. Perhaps it is impertinent."

"I am sure you did not mean to be impertinent, and I should like to know what was in your mind."

"I thought the lecture was cynical. You will, I think, admit that it is."

He nodded : and I went on.

"It struck me that the cynicism was what any clever man who chose to give his mind to it could produce, and therefore I spoke of it as 'cheap cynicism.'"

"Thank you," he said, with a smile. "Perhaps you are right. But no one has ever said such a thing to me before. Don't imagine I am offended. *Ex oribus parvulorum* : you know the rest."

I did, and I felt a little mortified. But the kindness of the tone soon removed all that feeling. I was a babe, to him ; and I had been a venturesome babe.

That was my interview with Thackeray. So far as I remember, I never saw him in private again ; and doubtless he soon forgot all that had passed. It had one good effect, so far as I was concerned. It made me much more modest in future in expressing opinions as to any man's literary work.—(*Ibid.*)

### Mischievous consequences of newspapers depending on the report of a reporter on a particular press.

On more occasions than one I have known questions arise as to what a member had said. The acoustic properties of the House of Commons are not as good as they might be. Many members do, or did, not know how to speak so as to make themselves heard : they spoke in a colloquial tone, or they turned their backs to the Speaker, or they faced him too directly. Lord Playfair once told me that he had been assured by Mr. Gladstone that the best way of securing that you should be heard in the Gallery, if not also in the House, was to speak straight across the Chamber. It can scarcely be said

that Mr. Gladstone practised what he preached in this respect. No member turned in more directions during a speech than he did. Lord Playfair had, he said, tried Mr. Gladstone's theoretical plan, and had found that he was always heard.

This is more or less of a digression. What I want to have understood is that the comparison of notes by reporters in No. 18 was not altogether unnecessary. I remember one curious illustration of this truth, which had its ludicrous side so far as I was concerned. It will not be forgotten that when the new Foreign Office and other offices were to be built in Parliament Street, some four or five or more architects competed, and a prize for the best design was awarded to one of them; I forget who it was. Lord Palmerston was premier at the time. He did not like any of the plans, and he set them all aside in favour of one that commended itself to him. Of course there was an outcry, and it was carried into the House of Commons. Mr. Beresford Hope led the crusade against Palmerston's choice, and one day he had made a speech and moved a resolution on the subject. He had been as severe as what Mr. Disraeli called his "Batavian graces," would permit, and there was much curiosity to know what Palmerston would say in reply. Thus, when he rose, there was a rustling as of loose papers, and the sound of men seeking to be comfortable in their seats. Palmerston took no heed of this, but began: "We have all heard," he said, "of the battles of the Big-Endians and the Little-Endians. We have all heard of the battle of the gauges. Now we are to have a battle of the styles." I was in the box, and I caught his first allusion rather than his exact words. I sat down in No. 18 to write my turn, and I soon found that nobody else had been as successful as myself. I was young in the Gallery, and modest about talking of my knowledge; and while I desired to speak out, I did not like to begin. At that moment George Clifford, a member of the staff of the *Times*, and one of the truest gentlemen that ever lived, came to me. I had known him through his brother Frederick, and he had been kind to my inexperience in the Gallery.

"Did you catch what Palmerston's first words were?" he asked.

"Yes. He said, 'We have all heard of the battles of the Big-Endians and the Little-Endians.'"

"Big-Endians and Little-Endians," said Clifford. "What did he mean?"

"You have read *Gulliver's Travels*, have you not?" said I.

"Oh, of course; I see now."

In a minute or two the explanation went round, and every reporter had got the allusion correctly. Now comes my misfortune. I wrote the speech out; it went to the printers. Those intelligent gentlemen—perhaps it was the "readers"—did not know of Big-Endians and Little-Endians. They had never heard of such beings. They had heard of battles in Western America among the Indians there. So they took pity on my ignorance and altered "Big-Endians and Little-Endians" into "big Indians and little Indians." Thus the report appeared in the *Morning Star*. It was cruel; but even then I had learned to cultivate patience in dealing with printers. Bad language has no effect upon them. To tear your own hair over their blunders is only to make yourself prematurely bald without curing them. I kept on my hair when I saw the report, and said nothing; my feelings were too deep for utterance.

One mischievous consequence of comparing notes in No. 18 was that occasionally, when the comparison had resulted in error, it was difficult for the member who was misreported to set himself right. All the reports or almost all were the same, and the public naturally thought that where there was such general agreement in them, they must be right and the member wrong. Experience has convinced me that nothing is more hurtful to the public, so far as reporting is concerned, than the collaboration of the representatives of different newspapers in the production of a report. Any report appearing in a score or a hundred newspapers, if it has a common origin, may and often does lead to mischief. Independent reports correct each

other. They can be compared, and errors in one can be shown by reference to another —(*Ibid* )

## Unscrupulous Trafficing in manufactured newspaper reports.

A member of the fraternity, of liners named Butterfield, was the chronicler of executions. He took every hanging, whether in London or the country, under his care. His customers were, to begin with, the evening papers. They received the first draft of his copy. It was simply done. The story of the crime was told, and some conventional phrases were used as to the behaviour of the convict on the way to the scaffold. All this was written beforehand, but Mr Butterfield usually arranged for a telegram from the place of execution when the hanging had taken place. Sometimes the telegram did not arrive, but the copy was sent in all the same. On one occasion he was premature. A man was to be hanged at some northern assize town. If I am not mistaken he was a tailor, who had killed his wife. On the morning appointed for the execution he had gone to a closet. Over his head was an open cistern of water. He got to this and drowned himself in it. Butterfield knew nothing of this, and sent his copy to the evening papers. In it he had some edifying phrases as to the behaviour of the convict on the scaffold. These were printed before the news of the suicide came to hand. Butterfield was looked on with disfavour by sub-editors after that. He was not greatly abashed by it. he demanded payment for the copy that had been used.

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It will not be forgotten that some thirty years ago a garrotting scare got up in London. Day by day the papers contained accounts of attempts to garrotte and rob foot passengers. Occasionally specific details were given. There was no mistake as to the alarm that prevailed. Letters were written to the newspapers complaining of the inefficiency of the police. It is the usual thing for the alarmed Briton to blame the poor police for everything they do and for everything they leave undone. I am not prepared to say that no

persons were garrotted and robbed in London at that time. Possibly, nay, probably there were some. If there had not been, the scare could not have arisen. But that scare was, in the main, the production of liners, and principally of two of their number—brothers, I believe, named Geary. They furnished most of the reports of garrottings, and distributed the supposed outrages in the most impartial manner over London. No district was safe, if these reports were to be trusted. The brothers reaped a rich harvest while the scare lasted. It would have continued longer if they had not overreached themselves. One night they wrote a telling story of a garrotting outrage in St. Paul's Churchyard. They killed the gentleman who was robbed: that is, they stated that he had died of the injuries he had received. The city police had never heard of the affair, and they were anxious to get particulars of it from the newspapers that had printed the story. They got all that could be given; but it was not much. There had been no murder, no robbery, no disturbance of the peace of any kind. The whole report was an invention. From that time little more was heard about garrotting in London.       \*               \*               \*               \*

Mention has been made of the ecclesiastical liner. He was a well-educated man. I believe he had a University career, and that he had been intended for the Church. He could write well; and it was beyond doubt that he knew all current ecclesiastical questions pretty thoroughly. In newspaper offices he was known as the "Bishop-maker." The story ran thus: when a See became vacant, the liner always sent to the papers, within two or three days, a short paragraph something like this:—"It is stated that the Bishopric of so and so will be conferred upon the Very Rev. Canon — or the Rev. Dr. —. The name of the Rev. Mr. — is also mentioned in connection with the appointment." The next day another paragraph would be sent putting the matter a little stronger; as—"There is a decided manifestation of feeling in ecclesiastical circles in favour of the choice of" (a clergyman previously named) "to fill the vacant see." Lord Palmerston was at that time the great dispenser of

ecclesiastical patronage, and the popular belief was that he was largely guided in his selections for bishoprics by the Earl of Shaftesbury. The theory arose that the latter was influenced by the paragraphs in the papers. He thought they represented a real body of opinion, and in this belief he recommended one of the clergymen named. Of course I do not mean to say that this was actually the case, I know nothing about the matter. But the theory as to the liner's work was as I have stated it ; and as a matter of fact clergymen whom he had named were chosen for bishoprics on more occasions than one. Hence the title of " Bishop-maker " bestowed upon the ecclesiastical liner.

Once this ingenious purveyor of news achieved a higher flight. There was some question agitating the Church at the time—I forget what it was. The liner took advantage of the fact and made many pounds out of it. He began by writing paragraphs describing the rise of a movement among some of the clergy, whose names were not given on the ground that as they were going to deal with the doings of their ecclesiastical superiors, it was not desirable that they should be individually known. The paragraphs were printed. They increased in number and grew longer. Then the anonymous clergymen began to hold meetings and to make speeches. These were duly reported. They were certainly interesting, and soon they furnished topics for leading articles. I forget how the fraud was discovered ; but discovered it was. There was no such movement as that described. There had never been such a movement. No meetings had been held : no speeches had been delivered. The reports were the invention of the liner. They were clever. He had contrived to introduce variety into them. While they were directed to the same end they did not advocate the same methods, and they were not in the same style. In short they might have been genuine : only they were not.—(*Ibid.*)



## Reports in different newspapers from one and the same source put public speakers at the mercy of a dull mischievous or dishonest reporter.

A report, it was said, was a report. If it was verbatim it could be supplied by anybody, and as it must be the same in all cases and for everybody, why should not the *Scotsman*\* be satisfied with reports supplied from the same source as other newspapers? In effect my reply was that the last thing Parliament ought to encourage was the supply of all reports from one source. By doing so, members would put themselves at the mercy of a single reporter. He might be dull, or mischievous, or dishonest. I have not met with many dishonest reporters in my time—very very few. But I have met some. I have known reporters who had political opinions, not to say convictions. Those opinions were always generous and usually rather wild; and they told against individual statesmen. Suppose political differences found their way into the one Parliamentary report, what chance would the public have of correcting the error or of knowing that there was error? Dr. Johnson was a passably honest man, who had nearly a monopoly of Parliamentary reporting; and did not he, in his confidential moments, declare that in his reports he always took care to let the damned Whigs have the worst of it? Independent reports corrected each other. The blunder of one reporter would be corrected by the accuracy of another; and there would be no likelihood of misrepresentation or misunderstanding.

One ingenious gentleman who had a seat in the Gallery brought forward a plan for a uniform report. It had nothing to commend it except its wasted ingenuity. The proprietor of a news agency, a rival of the Press Association, propounded a scheme for producing an official report which should be at the service of all newspapers. It had the incurable defect of all identical reports that have not been corrected by the speakers. If it was to wait for the correction,

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\* This is in reference to official reporting of the debates of Parliament.

it would be of no use to the newspapers; if it was not to wait, it might lead at times to serious misapprehension. Besides, no self-respecting newspaper would consent to put its reporting into the hands of officialdom. If the identical report was to be supplied by a trader in reports, it would be giving a wholly unjustifiable monopoly into the hands of that trader, and would leave both Parliament and the newspapers at his mercy. If the report was to be official, that would mean that the Government could control it. Of course, all Governments nowadays are honest and pure and strictly scrupulous in all their dealings. But a bad Government might come, or a bad man in a good Government: and the reports might be tampered with.—(*Ibid.*)

### **Illusions of the ear on the part of the Reporter due to bad pronunciation and imperfect articulation—the great sins of public speakers.**

A philosopher once remarked that a great part of the mental life of a thoughtful man is spent in correcting his first erroneous impressions. That "things are not what they seem" is the verdict of the philosopher as well as the poet. It is equally true that words are not always what they seem. At first sight this will appear somewhat paradoxical. "What can be more certain than a word?" the hasty critic will ask: "You see it in writing or in print, or you hear it uttered. Surely it is quite unmistakable?" Very plausibly put: yet if the critic will listen attentively next Sunday morning with the determination to be quite certain of every word in the sermon of his favorite preacher, he will probably find that half-a-dozen times during the delivery of the discourse, he will mis-hear a word. Some phrase following rapidly upon the mis-heard word will nearly always reveal to him what the word really uttered was. In most instances he will thus be enabled to correct his first erroneous impression

almost as soon as he receives it. But the fact remains that the first impression was erroneous—that the word was not what it seemed to be when it fell upon his tympanum. Even in conversation the same thing often takes place. We misapprehend a word, and almost instantly it flashes upon us that the word spoken was one entirely different in meaning though very similar in sound.

These mis-hearings, which are far more frequent than most people suppose, are the torment of the shorthand writer, anxious above all things to secure a perfectly accurate transcript. His attention being habitually fixed upon the words of a speaker, he is less likely than an ordinary hearer, who cares more for the sense than for the precise phraseology, to mistake the word spoken for some other resembling it; but, for the same reason, he is more alive to the possibility of blundering in this respect. There are many causes of mis-hearings. First there is the great similarity in sound between different words. Who has not noticed this? One half the puns in the language rest upon the fact. This resemblance in sound is, in truth, the root cause of the difficulty. All other causes are but secondary: in other words, they help to intensify the fact, but they do not create it. Imperfect articulation multiplies the resemblances in sound, and therefore deceives a hearer. Thus, "made your breeches" got interpreted once into "Major Breeches." The young lady whose cockney habits caused her to discard the aspirate, surprised a friend one day by asking, "Don't you think I get pretty?" That was how it sounded: but the enquiry really intended was the more conventional question: "Don't you think Highgate pretty?" Mr. Reed has recorded how on one occasion he took down from a speaker who was quoting poetry, the line "Watching from the Roman eye." He discovered that the line was "Watching from their home on high." Only the other day a similar instance occurred. An action was being tried in the law courts between two Greek merchants carrying on business in London. The shorthand writer taking down the evidence heard the plaintiff say, apparently, "I thought he was wronging his countrymen." The very next sen-

tence showed that the impression was mistaken, and that what the witness had said was, "I thought he was wrong in discounting them," referring to some bills, the subject-matter of the action. In this instance, the imperfect articulation of the speaker was excusable. No foreigner ever succeeds in acquiring English pronunciation correctly, and it would be almost a miracle if any foreigner did succeed in accomplishing that feat. But there are multitudes of Englishmen who use their own language in such a way as to make it often doubtful what they really say. They drop their voice at the end of a sentence; they slur over syllables, omitting vowels that give a word its distinctive character, and crowding together consonants that need to be uttered separately; they misplace the emphasis or accent; and they sometimes mispronounce words. In private conversation the fault has no serious results. If doubt be felt as to a word heard, a question put to the speaker will immediately lead to a correction of the error. But when listening to a public speaker there is no such resource. If from any cause a mistake is made, we are compelled to trust to our own vigilance to discover, first that it is a mistake, and secondly what the correct observation was. Sometimes this is purely a matter of conjecture. Mr. Stead lately gave, in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, a curious illustration of the difficulty. Sir Charles Russell, skilful as he is as an orator, shares, with many inferior speakers, the common fault of dropping his voice at the close of a sentence. In the concluding part of his speech before the Parnell Commission there was one sentence which suffered seriously in consequence of this little failing, one word being rendered in no less than four different ways by various London daily papers. The speaker said, "With the advent of that true union and reconciliation there will be dispelled, and dispelled for ever, the cloud, the weighty cloud, that has rested on the history of a noble,—and dimmed the glory of a mighty empire." According to the *Morning Post*, the *Daily News*, and the *Times*, Sir Charles Russell spoke of the "history of a noble race." The *Standard* and the *Daily Telegraph* made it, "noble name;" while the *Star* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* rendered it "noble head;" and the *Daily Chronicle* gave "noble

reign" as the true reading. What was the word actually used? It can hardly have been "head." The very fact that the three other renderings are alike as regards the vowel, suggests that the word was one in which the long *a* was an important element. "Race," "name," and "reign," were no doubt what the various reporters seemed to hear. Mr. Stead, after considering the context and the line of argument, comes to the conclusion that the word must have been "nation." A newspaper reporter, transcribing rapidly, in order that the latest bit of important evidence may appear in the next edition of his paper, has no time to make a careful examination of the context, such as the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* was able to make afterwards. He has to take whatever word seems best to fit in with the sense of the speech, and to correspond with the sound that he heard.

The sins of public speakers in the matter of pronunciation and articulation do not, however, exhaust the causes of mis-hearings. Bad acoustic arrangements often contribute to make it very difficult to tell what this or that word was. But perhaps the worst instant of all is where a speaker who does not raise his voice happens to speak in a building, the construction of which is unfavorable to hearing. The Law Courts are bad enough for hearing, as everybody who knows them can testify. But if anybody wishes to see reporters working under difficulties, let him step into the Lord Chief Justice's Court, when Lord Coleridge is delivering judgment in an important case. He will see shorthand writers sitting at the solicitor's table immediately beneath his Lordship, or standing up facing the judge, with their note-books resting on the judge's clerk's desk. He will, if he watches closely, notice that they are straining every nerve to hear correctly, while in various parts of the Court barristers and others are leaning forward, and bending their ears in the direction of the judge, in the effort to catch the "silvery," but by no means powerful eloquence of the Chief of the Queen's Bench Division. What wonder if, in such circumstances, a word now and then should resemble some other word. Another cause of mis-hearings is the readiness of public audiences to cheer some favorite orator before he has

ended a sentence. They have caught his point: it tickles their fancy; and they begin to applaud vociferously. The unhappy reporter wants the whole sentence, but the last words are only imperfectly heard, and there is a chance of at least as many renderings appearing in the newspapers as happened with Sir Charles Russell's peroration. It has been suggested, too, that there is a kind of partial deafness from which people may suffer, without being conscious of the fact—something analogous to partial color-blindness. Just as some people are unable to distinguish between two particular tints, though they make no mistakes with regard to others, so it has been thought that there are people who tend invariably to confound two particular sounds, though they can distinguish all others with perfect accuracy. Whether this is or is not so, is a question for the physiologist to determine. Some light would be thrown upon the problem if those who are in the habit of observing actual cases of mis-hearing would make a note of each instance that comes under their notice. A collection of mis-hearings, compiled by various observers, would prove useful in many ways, not only to reporters but to philologists also. Some of the causes to which mis-hearings are due, are probably irremovable. But those which originate with public speakers can clearly be avoided. Let the orator, when he glances over his morning paper and discovers a word wrong here and there in the report of the speech he delivered yesterday, ask himself to what extent the mistake was the result of his own carelessness of utterance, and not of the carelessness of the reporter, and he will soon show less alacrity in blaming the newspaper man, than has hitherto been the case with most speakers.—(*Phonetic Journal*.)

## Illusions of the eye on the part of the Reporter.

We have referred to the important subject of mis-hearings, and commented upon the difficulty which the conscientious reporter has to encounter from the dangerous liability of certain words, when imperfectly articulated, or spoken amid conditions

unfavourable for hearing, to resemble other words. These are illusions of the ear, and, as we showed, the ordinary hearer is at least as much, and in most cases rather more, liable to them than is the reporter. Another class of errors of which reporters are accused, and often wrongly accused, are mis-readings, which may be termed illusions of the eye. When hastily written, the ordinary longhand of ordinary people has an alarming tendency to cause ludicrous errors in reading. It may be asserted without fear of contradiction, that many of the blunders which critics who study their newspapers through intellectual microscopes, discover and parade before the world, and which those critics are only too prone to attribute to badly-written shorthand, occur in passages which never were written in shorthand, but were scribbled rapidly in longhand. Everybody has correspondents who write so carelessly that nothing but constant practice in deciphering the puzzles presented by their performances with the pen, enables one to understand their meaning. Signatures altogether unreadable—such as that which tempted Canon Kingsley to reply to a correspondent, “My dear sir, or madam, for your signature is not sufficiently legible for me to determine which of the two you are, nor indeed how your name is spelled”—are unfortunately very common. We once saw a poetic effusion in a local paper in which the word “goal” had been converted into “gaol,” with disastrous effects upon the sense as well as the rhythm of the verse in which the word occurred. A daily paper once appeared with “Her Majesty’s goat” instead of “Her Majesty’s Government”—an obvious instance of mis-reading, arising from the resemblance of the abbreviated form “Govt.” to the word “goat.” Lord Carnarvon, it is said, was once reported as having remarked, in proposing a toast to the clergy, “In these days a clergyman is expected to have the wisdom and learning of a journeyman tailor,” whereas what he did say was, “The wisdom and learning of a Jeremy Taylor.” An orator who complimented Mr. John Bright by describing him as the “Gamaliel of Birmingham,” was horrified to read in a published report of his speech that he was made to call the great Quaker statesman “the gamecock of Birmingham.” All these are evident cases of

mis-reading, and not of mis-reporting. The probable cause of the mis-reading in each instance was hastily written longhand. Mark Twain, it is well known, made great fun out of the circumstance that Horace Greeley wrote an atrociously bad hand. The varied readings which, according to the American humorist, the distracted compositors gave of a more than usually illegible passage, are of course exaggerated. Yet they are scarcely more ludicrous than many mis-readings which actually occur in everyday life, but which do not get recorded. We saw in a scientific paper a few years ago the following extraordinary statement: "Even fire, from a scientific point of view, is not concrete, although a body on being rendered incandescent, becomes visible in the dark. But evidently incandescence is not a concrete entity, but merely an expression signifying the incandescent state of such body." In the next number it was explained that the word printed "body" should have been "body." So much work of all kinds is executed now-a-days at high-pressure, that no one need be surprised at the fact that a great deal of almost illegible manuscript comes to the hands of the compositors. The wonder is, when all the circumstances are taken into account, that the errors made are so few. Nevertheless there are scribblers whose bad writing is quite inexcusable. People who write under no particular pressure, are often great offenders in the matter of careless handwriting. There seems to be a notion abroad that "compositors can read anything." In a certain sense this is true. That they do in course of time acquire a marvelous power of reading the most wretched scrawls that ever disfigured the surface of good paper, is undoubtedly the case. But that is no reason why they should be unnecessarily troubled with the scriptorial performances of the careless writer. An American newspaper editor, in laying down a code of rules for his contributors, ended with the following: "Writer legibly. Don't let your manuscript look like the track of a spider half-drowned in ink. We shan't mistake anyone for a genius, though he writes as crabbedly as Napoleon." It is because so many people now-a-days disregard this wholesome injunction, that most of the mistakes, attributed generally to reporters, but almost always the result of illegible longhand, occur.



While, however, badly written longhand is responsible for the majority of mis-readings, it is impossible to deny that there are mistakes which are clearly due to hastily written or mis-read shorthand. Professional shorthand writers tell amusing tales of the mistakes of dictatees. When they are candid, they confess to blunders equally ludicrous, made by themselves, when transcribing in a state of fatigue after working all day at note-taking. We have seen "conversation" transcribed "philosophy," a mistake obviously occasioned by a badly formed outline. From the same cause "create" has been converted into "correct," "disguise" into "disgrace," "decent sleeves" into "dozen sleeves," "worthy of the Board" into "worth all the Board," "happiness" into "pangs," and "paddling in the burn" has been transcribed "battling in the barn." These are all actual instances that have come under our notice, and the list might be easily increased. According to the proverb, mistakes will happen in the best regulated families, and the same thing is equally true of the best regulated shorthand. "To err is human," and no system of shorthand can be devised which will prevent learners from liability to blunder through imperfect knowledge, or old practitioners from blunder through fatigue, haste, or occasional carelessness. Mis-readings can never be entirely obviated. If they were, the occupation of a certain class of critics would be gone. But the shorthand writer who knows the kind of blunders that he is liable to make, will be on the alert, and will always be minimizing that liability. After all is said that can be said on this subject, it remains true that considering the great pressure under which most transcripts from shorthand are made, the proportion of blunders, not due to the inexperience of beginners, is remarkably small. Mis-readings are more often the result of illegible longhand than of bad shorthand. And there are critics who mis-read facts as well as writers and compositors who mis-read words. The man who sees in the occasional slip of an over-worked phonographer, a proof of the illegibility of Phonography, belongs to this class of critics. His deficiency lies in a mental incapacity to read facts aright. There may be a mote in the eye of a phonographer here and there, but the

obstacle which interrupts the gaze of our censorious critic is not that mote, but the very much larger beam in his own eye. Let him cast that out, and then look again.—(*Ibid.*)

## Illusions of the memory on the part of the Reporter.

We have lately indulged in a few remarks on the twin subjects of mis-readings and mis-hearings. The former we described as illusions of the eye, and the latter we termed illusions of the ear. There is a third group of blunders, to which shorthand writers and reporters are liable; and the public at large shares the failing with them. Everybody, at some time or other, mis-quotes; but the reporter gets blamed for more than his fair share of the erroneous quotations that find their way into print. As we ventured to hint in the articles to which we have referred, public speakers are by no means exempt from the common human tendency to err. It is because the memory plays fantastic tricks with some of us that there are so many mis-quotations. The illusions of the memory are as real, and probably quite as numerous, as the illusions of the eye and the ear. There is nothing to be surprised at in the circumstance. Have any two persons ever been known to give precisely the same account of an incident that has happened in the presence of both? Do any two witnesses ever agree in the versions they give in the witness-box, of transactions of which they both profess to have the fullest recollection? Everybody knows that such unanimity never occurs. If it were frequent, what would become of the arts of the cross-examining counsel? He is well aware that there will be discrepancies, and it is his great object to bring them out, and to exaggerate their importance in the eyes of the jury. If any two witnesses gave narratives that were absolutely identical in every detail, they would be suspected, and probably rightly suspected, of collusion. If there is so much uncertainty in the recollection of incidents, what wonder that there should be great uncertainty in the recollection of the precise words

of a few lines quoted at random from a long poem, read perhaps some years before ? As a fact, mis-quotations are common, and there are passages which have been so often mis-quoted, that the erroneous version is better known than the original.

Can mis-quotation be avoided ? We fear that it cannot in every case. But the liability to errors of this description may be minimized. The most painstaking writers are the men who are most careful in this respect. When a man will resolutely set to work to look up and verify every passage that he proposes to quote, he will very seldom be in error. This is what all our best writers have done. Public speakers who prepare their speeches beforehand may easily adopt the same course, and like Mr. Bright, write out on a slip of note-paper the lines which they intend to introduce to give point to their own remarks. Unhappily too many speeches are not prepared beforehand at all, and when preparation is made, few speakers are so diligent, or so anxious to secure perfect accuracy, as to hunt up, and copy the passage they intend to quote. This is all very well for the speaker, and for the hearers too, who probably do not notice whether the words, as uttered by the speaker, are those of the author from whom he has borrowed. But when the printed report appears in the newspaper, the conditions are altered. The reader seated in his armchair is able to scrutinize closely the report. A mistake which the audience did not detect, he detects at once. He has his library near at hand to refer to, if he feels any doubt as to the correctness of the quotation. It may be that the speaker himself, forgetful of his own carelessness, recognises in print an absurdity of which he was not conscious while speaking. Castigation follows, and it is upon the shoulders of the unfortunate reporter that it is almost certain to fall, unless that other scapegoat, the compositor, be, for the sake of variety, arraigned as the culprit. What is the reporter to do ? A good knowledge of literature will help him considerably. But he cannot be expected to have stored up in his memory the whole of the writings of all the British poets : nor can he be reasonably expected to know, in every case, who is the author from whom the

quotation is taken. Fortunately for him there is a trick in quotation. Nine men out of ten who introduce quotations into their speeches, do so at second-hand. In many cases they could not tell you who was the author, nor even the title of the poem or essay from which they were quoting. Somebody else has quoted it in their presence, or they have seen it quoted in print. In that case it is almost certain to be a passage that is quoted with tolerable frequency, and the reporter knows that if he can spare a few minutes to consult that valuable repository of selections, known as "Familiar Quotations," he will find just what he wants. The regularity with which such quotations recur, is remarkable; and there is an equal regularity about their recurrence in a mutilated form. A student of such blunders, if he were of a scientific turn, could calculate with tolerable accuracy, the date of the recurrence of any given error, just as the astronomer calculates the periodical return of a comet. But a speaker may misquote some author who has not been drawn upon by the compiler of "Familiar Quotations," or any similar work, and he may omit to mention the author. The reporter may not know. He may feel doubtful about the correctness of the passage as stated; he may have to leave the meeting early, or be otherwise prevented from consulting the speaker on the subject. If he be an experienced man, he will probably think of the old maxim, "When in doubt, leave it out." If he be inexperienced in journalism he will probably transcribe it just as he took it down.

There are speakers who never quote, and who, therefore, never mis-quote. And there are speakers who quote in such a way as to give no indication that they are quoting. As a rule, a quotation can be readily detected, because it usually appears as a jewel in an inferior setting, or a literary star amid the darkness of the surrounding oratory. Quotations are useful, and will continue to form part of the stock-in-trade of the public speaker. "He that borrows the aid of an equal understanding," said Burke, "doubles his own; he that uses that of a superior, elevates his own to the stature of that he contemplates." Therefore it is good for men to quote. But they

should make it clear that they are quoting. Sometimes the omission to do so leads to ludicrous mistakes. At the inauguration of the Bruce statue at Lochmaben some years ago, one of the speakers quoted the lines :

I've traveled east, I've traveled west,  
In dream I've been in Eden ;  
But Bruce's birthplace takes the gree;  
There's no place like Lochmaben.

Great was the orator's astonishment when he read in a local paper that " Mr. Graham, in responding to the toast, said he had traveled east and west, and had even dreamed he was in Eden ; but Bruce's birthplace took the gree ; there was no place like Lochmaben." This is obviously the blunder of a beginner, but if the speaker had only condescended to prefix to his citation the words " as the poet says," or to use some formula customary in such cases, the young reporter would not have been led astray. When Squire Ingot in " David Garrick " insists upon rendering a well-known passage, " One touch of Nature makes the whole world *began*," he has a mentor at hand in the person of his charming daughter ; but the platform orator who makes mistakes equally as ludicrous, seldom has a judicious corrector near. It is the business of the reporter to perform this necessary task. On the whole he does it well. But even he is not omniscient. Mistakes will sometimes escape his vigilance. All he can do is to make it a rule to verify every quotation, except when the exigencies of his work render it impossible. If he adopt that rule, and adhere to it inflexibly, he will not entirely eliminate the liability to error, but he will reduce the errors to a minimum. And perhaps some day he will come across a speaker who will recognise the fact that the reporter has done him a service by giving accurately some passage that he gave inaccurately. May be he will publicly acknowledge the fact. But such an event is not to be counted upon ; and the true reward of the reporter for his painstaking toil must still be his own consciousness that his work is well done, and the valuable habit which he will acquire of doing everything thoroughly

—the habit which in all spheres distinguishes the superior man from the inferior man, the artist from the bungler.— (*Ibid.*)

## **Dangers of Policemen extemporised as Shorthand Writers.**

That it is a good thing for everybody to learn shorthand we have said many times, and we shall probably repeat the remark many times in future. But it is not at all desirable that everybody who learns should on the strength of his knowledge set up as a reporter. The work of a reporter at a noisy meeting, where deep feeling is aroused, is often of a very difficult character ; and only a man of considerable experience will be able to furnish a really trustworthy report of speeches made under such circumstances. When a system of shorthand has been learned, much practice is needed before the writer acquires the ability to follow a rapid speaker ; and without constant practice the skill once attained, will "fall off." No newspaper editor would think of sending to an important public meeting, a man who had had little practice in writing shorthand at speed. Yet it looks very much as though the authorities who are responsible for the control of the Royal Irish Constabulary are in the habit of doing so. We think it an excellent thing that every policeman should be able to write shorthand. There are many occasions in which he is obliged to make notes. He may be on detective duty and may need to make notes expeditiously and fully. Shorthand will give him just the help he requires. In the course of his ordinary everyday work, he frequently has to take out his note-book and pencil and make an entry. He can do this, and do it well, without being a rapid writer, and without possessing any of the qualifications which constitute a good reporter. But in Ireland policemen are frequently called upon to act in the latter capacity. According to the reports of a recent case\*, a transcript handed in by a police constable was called in question on behalf of the accused.

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\* This evidently refers to the cases given at pp. 224 and 232.

It was alleged that his "transcript" agreed precisely with the report in the *Freeman* newspaper, which was admittedly an imperfect one, omitting many remarks made in the course of the speech. Thereupon the constabulary reporter was subjected to a very searching cross-examination. Being asked how long he had been practising shorthand, he is reported as having replied, "eighteen months." Further questions elicited that he had learned privately, and that that was the first occasion upon which he had acted as a reporter. He mentioned the system according to which he wrote; it is sufficient for us to state that it was not Phonography. The persistent M.P., who cross-examined the witness, proposed to test him, and the policeman then confessed that he was not a quick writer. We learn that two passages were then read out to the witness at "about 70 or 80 words per minute," and that after taking them down he was requested to read them, and failed, amid the laughter of the spectators. In the case of nervous people a test of that kind in open court would be unfair. But the policeman seems to have been perfectly calm and self-possessed. We have no desire to comment upon the political bearings of the matter, but it must be obvious to everybody that if criminal prosecutions are to be instituted upon the evidence of a shorthand note-taker, the utmost care should be taken to select only writers of undoubted competence. The plan of using policemen instead of professional shorthand writers may be economical, but it is palpably unjust to the accused, who may be convicted upon the testimony of shorthand notes which are altogether untrustworthy. That such a course must eventually bring discredit upon the administration of justice is so self-evident that we are surprised that a short-sighted policy of economy should have prevailed so long. But it is also unfair to the regular practitioners of shorthand. "What is the use of a man undergoing the long training that makes a skillful shorthand writer and an accurate note-taker," it will be asked, "if he is to be thrust aside when important work is wanted, and a constable who has been studying in private the text-books of an inferior system, is to be treated as if he were an accomplished reporter, and sent off to take down speeches by excited, and there-

fore rapid, Irish orators at excited public meetings?" The practice, if persisted in, must inevitably bring shorthand into disrepute. It seems difficult to believe that when the liberty of the subject may depend upon the accuracy or inaccuracy of a shorthand writer's notes, any responsible public department should allow considerations of economy to over-ride all other considerations in such a matter. Yet it is not easy to understand what other motives there can be for employing policemen instead of professional shorthand writers. It would be just as reasonable to use policemen with a slight knowledge of drugs to investigate a case of suspected poisoning, instead of calling in a properly-qualified medical man, on the ground that it would be cheaper to do so. The absurdity is not greater in the one case than in the other.

On other grounds the practice is equally objectionable. A shorthand writer's notes ought to be, like Cæsar's wife, above suspicion. But the notes taken by a policeman with the knowledge that they will probably be used in support of a police prosecution, will always be, whether justly or unjustly, open to grave suspicion. Shorthand, wielded by competent and independent men—men whose living depends upon their reputation as shorthand writers, men who therefore have everything to lose if they are not faithful and impartial recorders—is, as has often been said, the handmaid of justice. Shorthand, used by incompetent men, men who only employ it occasionally, and with whom it is not even the chief part of their work, may easily become the handmaid of injustice. At the best, a policeman's notes will be disputed by persons accused upon the strength of those notes; and any verdict or sentence that rests on the testimony of such notes, will fail to carry conviction to many who would never think of questioning the testimony of a professional shorthand writer. Shorthand, used judiciously, ought to be a valuable aid to the police force: but in the interests of shorthand it is necessary to protest strongly against the notion that a constable who has learned shorthand is therefore qualified to act as a reporter. The mischievous practice based upon that notion is one that all shorthand writers of whatever political views, ought to endeavor to get abrogated.—(*Ibid.*)



## Public speakers of remarkably retentive memories.

We often hear of instances of wonderful memories. Only a few years have passed away since a party sought to turn his marvellous powers of memory to a profitable purpose, by undertaking to recite in Long Acre Hall, the whole of Milton's "Paradise Lost," without a moment's hesitation, or the omission of a single word. A goodly number of persons paid their money to listen to the proof to be furnished of so extraordinary an instance of a retentive memory. He proceeded for two hours and a half, entirely fulfilling what he had engaged to do, and getting through in that time a third part of the book; but the monotony was so tiresome, that on the second night the audience were so few that he did not proceed with the recital of the remainder of Milton's great work. Yet I am not sure that this effort was equal to some successful efforts which have come under my own individual observation when I was a reporter in the House of Commons. The reciter of Milton's "Paradise Lost" in Long Acre Hall may for years have been engaged in committing that great poem to memory; whereas the speeches to which I allude, spoken from memory, by the members of the House of Commons, could, from the nature of the subjects to which they related, only have been written a few days before it was intended they should be spoken. Mr. Roebuck, late member for Sheffield, was remarkable for the retentiveness of his memory. It will be remembered that about the year 1834 he was retained as counsel for Mackenzie and others, who were arrested and tried on the charge of being the chief instigators of the Canadian rebellion of a few years before that time. A particular night was fixed for a great debate on that subject, and Mr. Roebuck wrote out at full length the speech which he intended to deliver on the occasion. Naturally anxious, considering the official connexion which he had with the leaders of the rebellion, that his speech should be accurately and fully reported, he sent a copy of it written in an elegant lady's hand, to each of the reporters in the gallery. I had the curiosity to follow him with his manuscript in my hand from

beginning to end of a speech which required nearly two hours in the delivery ; and during all that time there was not the variation of a word between the written and the spoken speech.

But I was on one occasion cognizant, when reporting in the House of Commons, of a still greater and more successful effort of the memory, than this. In, if I remember right, the year 1835, when the agitation for the repeal of the union between Great Britain and Ireland was at the height of its interest, and Mr. O'Connell in all his glory, the latter had fixed a particular night for a discussion of the whole question in all its more important bearings. Mr. Emerson, afterwards Sir Emerson Tennant, then member for Belfast, undertook the task of replying to Mr. O'Connell. Anticipating the figures and facts and arguments, judging by former speeches, which Mr. O'Connell would employ, he wrote out his speech at full length. A copy of it came into my hands the day before that on which the debate was appointed to take place ; and finding it to be full to overflowing of statistics, I concluded that it would be impossible for Mr. Tennant, or anyone else, to deliver the whole of that speech—which was one of extreme length—without reading at least those portions which dealt exclusively with a crowd of arithmetical figures. Yet incredible, as beforehand, the thing seemed to me, he repeated not only every word, but every figure, from beginning to end, without one instance of hesitation or a single mistake, although the delivery of the speech occupied three hours and three quarters. I repeat, that if I had not been an eye and ear witness to this proof of how remarkably retentive some men's memories are, I could not have believed that such a thing was possible as that of which I was cognizant on that evening.

I need hardly add that such achievements in this way are rarely witnessed, either in the House of Commons or anywhere else. When they are, in the House of Commons, it is a red-letter day in the life of the reporters, and they inwardly bless the benevolence of the speakers. In the two instances I have given, the possession of the

manuscript of the speeches before the latter were delivered, was a special relief to "the gentlemen of the gallery," because, in the first place the questions under consideration were of great public interest, and consequently it was important that full reports should be given; and in the second place, the figures and facts with which both speeches abounded rendered it unusually difficult to follow the speakers so closely, and to understand them so clearly, as to enable them to avoid omissions or misconceptions of what had been said. — (*James Grant, — The Newspaper Press : Its origin, progress, and present position.*)

## **Speeches that are perfect mumbles and ill-arranged.**

And here it is right I should remark, that no one who has no practical knowledge of the reporting profession, can have any idea of the difficulties with which reporters have to contend in the discharge of their duties, when they have to report the addresses of bad speakers. The badness of a speaker, in the vocabulary of "the gentlemen of the gallery," arises from two causes. One is when the speaker is imperfectly heard. This is a very common difficulty. Often, indeed, members of both Houses speak in so low a tone of voice, as that only an occasional sentence can be heard in the gallery. Under this head may also be classed imperfect hearing of the speaker on the part of the reporter so far as regards distinct articulation, although the voice may be audible enough. And yet this class of speakers are just those who are the readiest to feel indignant with reporters for not reporting their speeches correctly. Lord Lyttelton lately furnished us with an illustration of this. In May last he complained of the inaccuracies contained in a report which appeared in the *Times* of a speech of his in the House of Commons. The *Times* appended a note to Lord Lyttelton's letter, to the effect, that if readers could hear Lord Lyttelton speak, they would wonder that he could be reported at all. And according to Lord Lyttelton's own admission, other persons than reporters complain that no one can report what he says, nor any one read what he writes. "This," he

says, "is a truly deplorable predicament." No doubt it is; but is it not then unjust on his part to blame the reporters for the blunders which occur in their reports, especially as he admits, in effect, that the charge of his speeches being incapable of being correctly reported is true, for he adds:—"I have often acknowledged, and am willing to acknowledge over and over again, that these errors in my reported speeches, which are such, that if posterity reads them, I shall be believed to have been half-witted, are from my own fault." Is it not, then, illogical as well as unjust to complain, as he so often does, of the reporters, as if it were their fault? A gentleman in the gallery, whose disagreeable duty it has been again and again to report his lordship, assures me that his speeches are perfect mumbles from beginning to end.

The other chief difficulty with which reporters have to contend in the performance of their professional duties, is that of "taking down" those speeches which are inaccurate in the construction of the sentences. The short-hand, or verbatim reporter, is guided entirely by the sound of the speaker, not by the construction of his sentences, or the sense of his matter; but when he comes to extend his shorthand notes, so as to render the report fit to be put into the hands of the compositors, he finds the difficulty of his task to be greater than can be conceived by any one but himself. He must make at least tolerable English for even the worst speaker; otherwise the inaccuracies and slovenliness of the style would be ascribed to the reporter, not to the speaker. In connexion with this difficulty under which reporters have to labour, there is this other one,—that if speakers commit any errors as to historical or other facts which are generally known, the reporter is expected to give the facts correctly. When I commenced my duties as a reporter, an instance of this kind occurred on the occasion of the first speech which I had to report in the House of Lords. That speech was one by Lord Brougham, then Lord Chancellor, and the most prominent man in the hereditary House. He made a reference to the fact of Pope being in the habit of constantly saying in conversation, "God mend me!" and to the

ill-natured and irreverent observation made on one occasion by a literary man of the day, whose name I do not at the moment remember, who replied, "God mend you ! Why, it would be easier for God to *make* a dozen others than to *mend* you !" I need not say that I had no sympathy then, as I have none now, with an observation so irreverent ; but it was my duty to report it as quoted by Lord Brougham. He, however, gave an entirely inaccurate version of the anecdote ; and I, knowing the right one, consulted Mr. Black, then Editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, as to whether I should give it as spoken by Lord Brougham, or in the way which I knew to be the right one. "Oh ! in the right way, certainly," said Mr. Black ; "because," he added, "if you give the wrong version, though so given by him, the public will charge you with the error, not Lord Brougham." And yet, unreasonable though the thing is, the very men who are the most defective in their diction, and most in the habit of falling into inaccuracies as to facts, are just the men to write to the Editors of the morning journals, complaining of the alleged injustice done to them by the reporters.--(*Ibid.*)

### **A Speech reported as if a Speech delivered in italics.**

The most indifferent speakers are a good deal in the habit of complaining that their speeches are not correctly reported. In recording the following amusing circumstances which occurred, arising out of one of these complaints, it may be well to state that in a work which proceeded from my pen more than thirty years ago, I gave the leading incidents in the story which follows, and which were furnished to me by the reporter himself who figured in it ; but as he was living at the time, and as the paper in which the report alluded to was then in a flourishing condition, I did not give the name of either. Both have since ceased to exist. The name of the reporter was Mr. O'Dwyer, a man of great classical attainments, knowledge of the living languages, and gentlemanly manners, for which combination of qualities he was appointed as representative

of the *Morning Herald* to proceed, in 1815, on the conclusion of the War, from one capital of Continental Europe to another, wherever diplomacy might be most active and interesting, until diplomacy closed its proceedings at the Congress of Vienna. Mr. O'Dwyer used to mention to me with pardonable pride, that he had not only seen, but had had conversation with, at that time, every crowned head in Europe. With these few introductory remarks, I proceed with the narrative which has led me to make them.

The late Mr. Richard Martin, member for Galway, was one of those who sometimes complained of the reporters. Mr. Martin—or Dick Martin, as he was called in the House—though a very humane man, especially to the brute creation, and who was the author of a Bill well known at the time for the Suppression of Cruelty to Animals, had a great deal of eccentricity about him. Having on one occasion said something so very ludicrous as to convulse the House with laughter, Mr. O'Dwyer underlined the passage in his report of Mr. Martin's speech in the *Morning Herald*; and the compositors, of course, printed it in italics. The circumstance afforded infinite amusement to the whole town on the day on which it appeared; and the honourable gentleman was chafed beyond measure, not only for the ludicrousness of the speech itself, but for its being reported in italics. "Allow me to congratulate you," said one of his M. P. friends, next morning, before Mr. Martin had seen any of the papers, "allow me to congratulate you on your new discovery in the art of oratory."

"On the what?" said Dick, hastily, and looking quite amazed.

"Why, did you not speak in a manner different from any one else, last night?" added the other.

"Me!" said the member for Galway. "And faith but it's myself would like to know what you mane," continued he, getting a little out of temper.

"Mean," said the other ; " can you possibly be ignorant that you spoke a part of your speech last night in italics ! "

"Spoke in italics !" observed Dick, knitting his brow, and throwing himself back in consequence of the tempest of indignation which was now gathering in his breast. "Spoke in italics ! Do you mane, sir, to be after insulting me ! " demanded the friend of four-footed animals.

" Look at the *Morning Herald*, and then say whether I have not spoken the truth," said Dick's friend, handing him a copy of the paper in question.

"Thunder and lightning !" exclaimed the hon. gentleman, turning black with horror at the report of his speech ; "thunder and lightning ! and sure enough the villain of a reporther has made myself spake in italics ! I will be after punishing the rascal this very evening."

Mr. Martin, by some means or other, contrived to find out that Mr. O'Dwyer was the gentleman who reported his speech. When the House met in the evening, the hon. member made it his first work to visit the gallery, to take the "reporther," as he always called him, to task. The latter chanced to be in the reporters' room at the time. "Are you the gentleman who reported my speech in the *Morning Herald* this morning ! "

"I had that honour," said Mr. O'Dwyer, with infinite *nouchalance*.

"Honour, sir ! Was it honour you called it, to report me in such a way ! 'Pon my word, sir, I have never seen such consummate effrontery ever since I was a member of Parliament. What, sir, have you to say for yourself for treating me in this way ! " Mr. Martin seemed almost bursting with rage as he spoke.

"In what way ! " inquired the reporter, with the same *sang froid* as before.

“ Why, sir, by making me spake in italics, to be sure ! ” The hon. gentleman laid an emphasis on the word, ‘ italics ’ which afforded no bad imitation of the report of a musket.

“ Mr. Martin,” said the reporter ; “ Mr. Martin —— ”

“ Don’t be after speaking to me, sir,” interrupted Mr. Martin.

“ You have insulted me, sir, and I will bring—— ”

“ Sir,” interposed Mr. O’Dwyer. “ sir, if you have any ground of complaint, you know your remedy. Here is my card.”

Mr. O’Dwyer pulled out his card-case from his pocket, and presented his card to the hon. gentleman. The latter looked first at the card, and then at the reporter, as if utterly confounded ; and, without taking the card out of Mr. O’Dwyer’s hand, or uttering a word, he hurried down-stairs to the House, and almost out of breath from the conjoined effects of the anger which he felt, and the haste with which he had run down-stairs, said, without waiting till the business before the House was disposed of, that he had to call the attention of Mr. Speaker and the House to one of the grossest insults ever offered to a member of Parliament. “ Sir,” said the hon. gentleman, addressing the Speaker, “ Sir,” you and hon. members must be aware that I had the honour of addressing this House last night. (Ironical cries of ‘ Hear, hear.’) Well, Sir, my speech is most villanously reported in the *Morning Herald* of this morning. (Suppressed titters of laughter were heard in all parts of the House.) But, Mr. Spaker, it is not of the inaccurate reporthing that I so much complain, as of the circumstance of the reporther having made me spake in italics. (Roars of laughter, which continued for some time.) I appeal to you, Sir, and to those hon. members who heard me, whether I spoke in italics ! (Renewed bursts of laughter from all parts of the House.) You know, Mr. Spaker, and so does every gentleman in this House, that I never spake in italics at all at all. (Shouts of laughter.) But, Sir, allow me to say that this, bad as it is, is not the worst of the matter.



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Will you believe it, Sir?—will any hon. member in this House believe it—that when I went to the reporter to ask for an explanation, he told me, with the most entire effrontery, that if I felt myself aggrieved, I knew my remedy, at the same time handing me his card, Sir! The short and long of it is, Sir, that this reporter wants to fight a duel with me!” (Peals of laughter such as were rarely before or have been since heard within the walls of Parliament, followed the conclusion of Mr. Martin’s speech.) When these had in some measure subsided, he moved, “that Mr. O’Dwyer be called to the bar of the House for having committed a breach of the privileges of the House.” But there being no one to second the motion, it, of course, fell to the ground.—(*Ibid.*)

### **Mr. Disraeli’s fastidiousness about his Speeches.**

“To be chattered about in the penny Press, is,” says a latter-day philosopher, “the nineteenth-century idea of immortality.” But this hankering after notoriety in the newspapers is most natural in—of all people—a member of Parliament. Publicity is the breath of his nostrils. If he does not keep his name continually before the eyes of his constituency, an outcry that he is a mere cipher, unable to do anything except to trudge through the division lobbies, will probably be raised against him; and a more active representative—*i.e.* a man more glib with his tongue—will be looked for by the electors.

The interest with which Disraeli looked out for reports of his speeches in the early years of his Parliamentary career is manifest in his letters to his sister. He tells her, from time to time, where to look for reports of his speeches in the House of Commons. “The *Times* report good”; “well reported in the *Times*,” are frequently met with. In the course of the Session of 1839 he delivered what he considered to be a good speech in Committee on a Bill; but “unfortunately, as generally happens on

long Committee nights, there was scarcely a reporter in the gallery." On August 30, 1848, he writes in reference to a speech he delivered on the 16th of the month: "I have no cause to complain of the reporters. The version of the *Times*, which now sells, 40,000 a day is almost verbatim, six first-rate shorthand-writers having been employed. The *Chronicle* is hardly inferior, tho' it only sells 4000; the *Herald* 5000." On July 8, 1849, he writes: "My speech last night was at 2-30, and consequently not a semblance of a report in the journals." By 1851 he had evidently grown more fastidious as to the reports of his speeches. He complains of one report as "incoherent and contradictory nonsense." "It made me blush," he adds, "though I ought to be hardened by this time on such a subject." Sir William Fraser, in his interesting work, "*Disraeli and his day*,"\* mentions that once, when discussing with Disraeli—after the latter had reached the Premiership—whether a verbatim report of all speeches ought to be published in "*Hansard*," he said to him: "I suppose you look down with Olympian severity on those matters." Disraeli replied: "On the contrary, I feel on the matter acutely. I don't so much object to what they leave out. I am deeply annoyed at what they put in. For example, every one believes that I have said that my views as to the admission of Jews into Parliament are peculiar and mysterious! Peculiar they are, for obvious reasons; but at no period of my life was I capable of uttering such arrant nonsense as to say that they are mysterious." (Michael Macdonagh. *The Book of Parliament*.)

## Printers held responsible for Reporter's mistakes.

We recently quoted some amusing errors of the press for which the printer was held responsible. "X" contributes to the *Daily News* a collection of mistakes with which the reporter is credited. He writes: So-called printers' blunders are very often, I think, other

\* *Disraeli and his Day* by Sir William Fraser Bart., M.A. Christ Church Oxford (London Kegan Paul, French, Tribner & Co. Ltd.)

people's blunders. The reporters are not blameless. I call to mind several that are attributable to the latter class. Speaking two or three years ago at a public meeting Mr. Chamberlain said, "I feel like Figaro in Beaumarchais." The reporter of one of your daily contemporaries (I suspected he lives in the convenient suburb of Brixton) made him say, "I fell like Figaro in the Bon Marché." During the discussions on the Crimes Act in the House of Commons a Liberal politician—Mr. John Morley, I think—said, "Some of the resident magistrates in Ireland are no more capable of stating a case than they are of writing a Greek ode." In an Irish paper the latter part of the passage ran, "riding a Greek goat." The reporter's ear misled him, and he did not pause to inquire whether people ride goats, or whether Greek goats are harder to ride than other goats. These two amusing blunders I can vouch for. There is another which comes from America that is perhaps less authentic. It is said that on the occasion of a mayor of a little town in the State of New York being entertained at dinner, one of the speakers described him as "a noble old burgher proudly loving his native state," and that the report had it, "a nobby old burglar prowling around in a naked state."

From another collection we cull the following : Mr. Asquith once referred to the Government's "pique or temper : " the reporter wrote "peacock temper." A speaker at Exeter Hall, replying to an attack, said it was "a double lie in the shape of half a truth," which, by the ingenuity of the reporter, appeared as "a double eye in the shape of half a tooth." Lord W. Russell, the then Canon of Windsor, had been trying, he said, for forty years to cure drunkards by making them drink in moderation ; the local newspaper had it that he had been trying for forty years to drink in moderation, but had never once succeeded. Sir James Grant, in a speech in the Canadian House of Commons, once referred to a man's thorax ; when in print it read "a man's pickaxe ; " and on another occasion his reference to "food for the gods," appeared "food for the oods."—*Phonetic Journal*.

## How transcripts happen to be faulty.

The attainment of a high speed—or indeed any speed—will be altogether useless if it be unaccompanied by the ability to transcribe correctly. Let us therefore consider for a moment some of the causes of error in transcribing. Notes written under pressure present many peculiarities and are well calculated to trip up the careless or thoughtless, or even those who do not deserve other epithet, who are nevertheless unfamiliar with their own failings when writing rapidly. One of the most prolific causes of mistake is the absence of an initial vowel which ought to have been inserted. For these reasons I have known “Ambition” rendered “men,” “Addition” turned into “condition,” “Attack” converted into “talk,” in such a sentence as “He was often the subject of attack.” In the phrase “Mr. Brown’s researches had been *patiently* carried out,” the word underlined was rendered variously by several writers. First it appeared as “efficiently” for which there is some ground of excuse. Then came “apparently,” which, of course, was a gross blunder, led up to by the fault of writing the wrong outline, “p-r-nt-l.” Still another writer made it appear that Mr. Brown’s researches had been “fortunately” carried out. Faulty early training must have been responsible for the blunder “apparently,” but in the other cases it must be put down to unfamiliarity with one’s own notes.

Most amusing instance occurred in the case of “Mr. Gladstone had refused *dissenters* their rights.” One slovenly short-hand writer rendered thus “d-z-zs,” thereby completely altering the sense ; while another who wrote even a worse style, made it “th-znds.” It will hardly be credited that the short-hand could have been so badly written as to bring about the change from “dissenters” to “thousands,” but it is an instance which occurred within my own knowledge. I have always taught the exaggeration of the double length strokes, and should myself write “dissenters” with considerably more than a double-sized character. Provided the exaggeration be not carried to too great a length (literary as well as figuratively) this advice can only make for legibility.

There was another case in which the speaker had said "The British constitution consisted of the Lords Temporal, the Lords Spiritual and the Commons." It was the last word which caused all the mischief. In the case I have in my mind, the writer had in the short-hand note the word "Commons" properly vocalised and with the prefix for "Com" also inserted. It looked something like "atend-ents" and the real cause of trouble was that the stroke vowel had been written too close to the consonant. It was consequently translated "the Lords Temporal, the Lords Spiritual, and the "Attendants." Gross blunder as this is, it is one of those easily committed by a young student, without much knowledge of men and things, and a comparison between the word "attendants," and the *roughly* written "Commons," will show how easy it is for a novice, at any rate, to fall into such an extraordinary error. In a lecture on "London 20 years ago" the speaker had referred to the district of West Green which had grown up. This came out as "Waste ground" in the transcript. Then in the same lecture "a very handsome church" was made to read "a very insignificant church." Here a violation of rule led to the error. In the word "Handsome," the circle should have been put to the syllable to which it belonged, as is done in the phrase "in some cases." Otherwise, of course the circle would be put to the first curve, as in "noisome," "mason." Later on the word "land owners" was transcribed land owners. I recollect also hearing a lecturer on law give utterance to the phrase, "the law and the subject is all right," and finding afterwards that this had been transformed into "all rot." As the latter was a somewhat uncommon expression, to say the least, it should not have been taken as the correct reading by the transcriber unless there was actually a vowel to confirm it. On another occasion Mr. Gladstone was made to refer to the "*dishonest* suggestions of his followers" instead of "the *advanced* suggestions." In the report of a company's meeting, a short-hand writer made the chairman say "The company has already *buried* 30 thousand pounds," when it should have appeared that they have only *borrowed* that sum. "Quotations" has been known to clash with "Narratives," and this instance shows again the advantage of a bold

style over the crammed one. If the hooks that are intended to be large are made rather more than twice the size of the ordinary hook there would be little liability to fall into error. Very often, too, the transcriber is in considerably in doubt as to whether he intended a word for the singular or plural. Make your double circles fully three times the size of the ordinary ones, and let this golden rule also apply to double-lengths, final "Tion" hook, etc. To give a few instances : case ; cases ; pen : passion ; placed, plaster ; ma, mother. This safeguard is particularly valuable in the case of plural words formed with the double circle. But to turn "Mountainous scenery" into "*monotonous* scenery" presumes one to have been guilty of bad choice of outline. How are these "pit-falls in transcribing" to be avoided ? I give the following 20 hints, which, taken together, practically cover the subject. (1) There should be thoroughness in the study of the rules. (2) Write always with a pen in preference to pencil. (3) Read all the printed short-hand you can find, in order to acquire familiarity with the best outlines and phrases. (4) Vocalize proper names, as a general rule and all unfamiliar words. (5) Remember the great importance of inserting the initial vowel wherever time will permit. (6) Strengthen your weak spots in grammar and composition. (7) Endeavour to follow the sense of the matter you are taking down. (8) Be sure of your grammalogues and contractions. (9) Do not indulge in too much unauthorised abbreviations. (10) Cultivate the habit of writing everything in position, for while it may be true that many words do not require special position, the practice will ensure the placing in their right places of those words which must be written according to the positional rules if you wish to render an accurate transcript. (11) Make the reading of your own notes a special study. (12) Adopt a definite method of punctuation, especially indicating the full stop mark by the small cross recommended in the text-books. (13) Write all figures from one to nine in short-hand ; but all figures, two or more in number are better represented as figures. Every single figure, if written as such with any rapidity will easily clash with a short-hand outline. (14) Exaggerate your large hooks, circles, loops and curves



and generally write a bold, decisive style. (15) Cultivate the memory by repeating the words after the reader or speaker. (16) Practise slow writing for neatness and exercise of phrases. (17) Do your work with the best obtainable materials. (18) Resist the temptation to write a slovenly style and when taking notes at much below your highest speed, write as neatly as you can. (19) Read over and revise your notes as soon as possible after they have been taken. (20) Mix a certain amount of common sense with the other ingredients.—Bernard De Bear—*High Speed in Short-Hand*,—How to attain it.

## **O'Connell's disrespectful conduct towards Reporters.**

In July, 1833, in the old House of Commons, Mr. O'Connell made a vehement attack on the reporters as a body. The specific charge on which he grounded his assault was that they, on various occasions neglected, from personal motives, either to report his speeches at all, or not to report them with the fulness which their importance, as bearing on the interests of Ireland, had a right to claim for them. But, in addition to this specific imputation on the honour of the reporters, Mr. O'Connell preferred charges against them of general dishonesty. He ended his incriminatory speech by moving that the representatives of the *Times* and *Morning Chronicle* be brought to the bar of the House for not reporting a particular speech in full. Curiously enough the motion was seconded by Mr. O'Dwyer, member for an Irish borough, who had been a reporter on the *Times* before he obtained a seat in Parliament. As he was but a very indifferent reporter, they had ever afterwards, according to a statement of Mr. Knight Hunt, this joke at Mr. O'Dwyer's expense,—that because he was unfit to be a reporter for the *Times* he was sent to the House to be a member of Parliament. Mr. O'Connell's motion was lost by a majority of 159 to 48. The minority of 48 consisted, it is right to state, almost exclusively of Irish Liberal members, then called "O'Connell's Tail." But though

in this sense, the reporters were victorious over Mr. O'Connell, they were not satisfied with a Parliamentary triumph. Their moral character, so far as related to the faithful and upright discharge of their professional duties, had been impugned, and they resolved not to rest till they extorted from Mr. O'Connell reparation for the wrong he had done them. With this view the entire body of reporters,—those belonging to papers which he had not assailed and aspersed, equally with the reporters on the *Times* and *Morning Chronicle*, against whom his charges were preferred,—joined together in a written resolution that they would never again report a single word which Mr. O'Connell spoke in the House until he had publicly withdrawn the charges against a section of their body. It is right here to state, as showing the high esteem in which reporters are held, both by the Editors and proprietors of newspapers, that in no one instance did they object to the course thus adopted by their reporting corps. Mr. O'Connell on receiving the copy of the resolution referred to, which was duly sent him determined that he was not to be beaten by a combination of reporters, and he fancied that he saw a way whereby his triumph and their discomfiture were certain. He resolved that if his speeches were not to be reported, neither should those of any other member of the House. The course whereby he saw he could accomplish his purpose, was to take advantage of a standing rule of the House. I have before stated that not only at that time, but until a few years ago, strangers were only allowed to enter the Gallery on sufferance, and a member wishing, for any particular reason, to have strangers turned out, had only, addressing the Speaker, to say, "I think, Sir, I see strangers in the Gallery," to insure from the latter an immediate response, in his loudest and most authoritative tones, "Strangers must withdraw ;" and that command was always obeyed by the "strangers" with as great alacrity as if an announcement had been made that the House was on fire.

It was by a resort to this expedient that Mr. O'Connell felt assured he could easily vanquish the rebellious reporters ; but before having recourse to it he thought it better to put the matter to a

practical test, by making a speech of some length and importance on the following evening. He accordingly did so, and, to his great mortification, mingled with deep indignation, he found that not one word of what he said was given in any of the journals next morning; while, to make the matter worse, the speeches of other members on other subjects were reported at full length. This only had the effect of making Mr. O'Connell more resolute than before to vanquish the reporters; and accordingly the House having assembled on the following evening, and the Speaker having taken the chair, Mr. O'Connell rose, and turning to the Speaker, said, in the traditional terms made use of on such occasions, "I think, Sir, I see strangers in the Gallery." Scarcely had the last word emanated from the lips of Mr. O'Connell, than the stentorian voice of the Speaker—then the Right Hon. Charles Manners Sutton—was heard saying, "Strangers must withdraw." The gallery was cleared of "strangers," in which designation reporters were of course included. Mr. O'Connell then entered into an explanation of the reasons which had imposed on him the duty of adopting that course, and ended with an intimation that he would persist in it until his speeches should cease to be ignored by the reporters.

The public, as was to be expected, being aware beforehand of the intentions of Mr. O'Connell in his conflict with the reporters, were intensely anxious to see the papers of the following day. Only imagine, then, what must have been the universal surprise and disappointment when they did not find a single sentence in any of the journals relative to the proceedings in Parliament of the previous evening. The general impression was that the Editors and proprietors of the several papers would interpose; and require the reporters, out of regard to the interest of the journals they severally represented to withdraw the resolution to which they had come. But the Editors and proprietors did not interfere. They left the matter in the hands of the reporters themselves. This state of things went on for more than a week—if I remember rightly, for ten days. The reporters at-

tended outside the gallery every evening, as usual, not knowing whether Mr. O'Connell might not at any moment say something in the way of expressing regret for the language he had used in relation to the reporters, and thereby cause the door of the gallery to be thrown open, and they consequently feel called on to resume the discharge of their professional duties as usual. Night after night, during this interval, as we were informed by other members, Mr. O'Connell complained to the House of the injustice which he had received at the hands of the reporters ; but for the first few nights there were mingled with his complaints a tone of defiance and an aggravation of the wrong he had originally done to them. After that, however, he confined himself to what he regarded as the grounds on which he felt himself aggrieved. I remember as well as if it had been but yesterday, hearing, while standing with other reporters at the door of the gallery, Mr. O'Connell setting forth his sense of the wrongs which had been done him, in terms touchingly plaintive, and in a voice the most musical and sonorous I ever heard in my life. About the seventh or eight day the public feeling was seen by the reporters to be that they had done enough to vindicate their character ; and several of the most influential members in the House appealed to them not to carry the matter farther, and they therefore allowed it to drop, and resumed the fulfilment of their professional functions as before.

Mr. O'Connell, I ought to add, made some sort of amends to the reporters after this collision, with which they were satisfied, and from that time they as fully and faithfully reported his speeches as they had previously done.

I ought to add, that it would be impossible for that portion of the public who were not alive in the year 1833, to form any conception of the extraordinary effect produced by the utter absence in all the public journals of Parliamentary intelligence, when every one knew that the House was not only in Session at the time, but that matters of the deepest importance relative to Ireland, were nightly

before it. In the House the sombre effect of there being no reporters nor strangers in the gallery conjoined with the knowledge of the fact that not one syllable of what they were saying or hearing would ever be known outside the walls of the House, was of the most depressing kind. Even the reporters themselves, though it gave them practically an eight or ten days immunity from their laborious and responsible work,—even they—I say this speaking from my own experience—shared in the general lamentation over the existing state of things. (*The Newspaper Press: Its Origin—Progress—and Present Position* by James Grant.)

### **Effect of ill-feeling between a Reporter and a public Speaker.**

There always have been and I doubt not there are now and ever will be, certain members of both Houses of Parliament favourites or the reverse with the reporters. This, in almost every instance, depends on the social character of the parties. Any one who is ungenial or ungenerous, or disagreeable in any way in his manners never can find access to the good graces of the gentlemen of the gallery. The late Sir Robert Peel was never popular with the reporters of his day nor indeed was he personally with any of the members of the House. There were a haughtiness and coldness in his bearing which repelled instead of attracting. But this, I need not say, never influenced the manner in which the reporters reported his speeches. His position in the Senate and the country was too high and his speeches were too able and too eloquent for that. But there was one man, soon after the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832 who was especially unpopular with the reporters. I allude to Mr. Spring Rice then, for some years, Chancellor of the Exchequer and afterwards Lord Monteagle. He was deemed by the reporters to be devoid of every generous feeling and wrapped up entirely in himself. They expressed this opinion by not reporting at any length and sometimes not reporting at all, such speeches of his as were not of any importance to the country. This statement I ground on my own observation at the time, and curiously enough I was furnished with a confirmation of its truth by a letter of Lord Lyt-

telton's which lately appeared in the public journals in relation to the reporters in the House of Commons. And I must add that the unpopularity which attached to Mr. Spring Rice in the House of Commons, followed him on his elevation to the House of Lords. I am not sure, indeed whether as Lord Monteagle he was not even less popular than in the Lower House, both with the reporters and the Peers. It would indeed be a question whether Lord Monteagle was most unpopular with the former or with the latter.

It is pleasing to be able to add that the favourites with the reporters have always been more numerous than those who were the opposite. But in the House of Commons there was, until lately one who for the full period of half a century was a special favourite. Need I name him ? There never was a man who was so favourite personally with, not the reporters only, but with all the gentlemen filling the higher positions on the press, as the late Lord Palmerston. The reporters of all the papers without reference to the point as to whether the paper they represented were favourable or opposed to his Government vied with each other in their anxiety to pay every attention to whatever he said. And it is due to his memory to say, that never was there a man of greater kindness of heart, nor of more geniality of manner, nor in a word, of nobler nature than he.—*James Grant—The Newspaper Press, : its origin, progress and present position.*

## Pitfalls in Transcribing Shorthand Notes.

That shorthand is an extremely useful art is an undeniable fact, but the use of the system causes writers much trouble in transcribing in various ways. The expert writer is not free from trouble. This does not arise from any defect in the system of shorthand, but from ulterior causes, mostly the fault of the writer himself.

"Bad outlines," I think, must rank as the most fruitful cause of transcriber's troubles. What member of this Association has not at some time or other, when transcribing, come across an outline

practically indecipherable. This fault is common to almost all phonographers, but a careful reference to the context will nearly always give some idea of what the word is. Careful formation of outlines and plenty of practice at a low speed will do away with this trouble to a very large extent.

The next in order of trouble is caused by "mis-hearing." It is of very frequent occurrence and arises through the writer being too far from the speaker, or through some defect in the acoustic properties of the office or hall which makes it difficult to hear all that is being said. Sometimes the result is very ludicrous. The following are a few instances of mis-hearing: "overtax" instead of "overt acts"; "Countess of Ayr" instead of "county surveyor"; "watching from the Roman eye" instead of watching from their home on high." A speaker in Parliament once was reported to have said, "What do the Turks want? To be in Asia!" What he really said, was, "What do the Turks want? To be a nation!" I was once a victim to mis-hearing. I took down the words "foundered proof," and thinking it was a technical term I had not heard before, transcribed it as such. What I ought to have written was "foundry proof." To obviate the trouble, reference must be made to the speaker or his notes, unless the context is very plain, and should at a glance show what the mis-heard word should be.

Many writers do not study the context of what they are transcribing, but simply write whatever the doubtful outline suggests, without troubling to see whether it is the right word. A clerk once had a letter to write which ended, "We are ready to assume that he is *correct*," but when transcribing made it read, "We are ready to assume that he is *cracked*." This arose purely from want of thought, and caused some annoyance.

Non-vocalisation of similar outlines is another pitfall to the transcriber. There are, as you are all well aware, many outlines similar to each other, and unless vocalized when written at a high speed, might easily be mistaken for a word entirely different and thus destroy the context entirely. It is told of a certain young phono-

grapher, that he held shorthand in very high esteem until in transcribing a speech he came across the outline *m n s t r* in his notes, and spent several hours finding out whether it should be "ministry" or "monastery." He came to the conclusion that shorthand fell short of what it claimed to be. His trouble might have easily been avoided by inserting the vowel. (The young phonographer would have had no trouble at all if he had mastered the "List of similar Words, distinguished by a difference of outline" in Pitman's Shorthand "Reporter"; the outlines there given are *ministry*; *monastery* —Ed. P.J.)

Trade terms are causes of much bother, but this is easily got over by giving attention to the terms used in whatever trade you are employed in, and fairly mastering the outlines. A friend of mine was required to say in a letter that, "some goods were packed in ullaged boxes," but he never having heard this term in any previous office, transcribed it as "orange boxes." Of course the term was foreign to him, hence his mistake, but having heard it once he was not liable to fall into the error again.

A small percentage of trouble to writers is the use of Latin and other phrases. The average clerk is not troubled in this respect very much, although a knowledge of common phrases is useful, and will save many hours of worry as to what you have taken down. I once had to take down the Latin Phrase, *de gustibus non est disputandum*, but fortunately enough for me, I was able to retain the phrase in my mind. I suppose the anecdote of the reporter is well-known who wrote, "I may cuss Plato, I may cuss Socrates, said Major Veritas," for the Latin phrase which he had to report: *Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates sed Major veratis*, which being translated means, "Friend of Plato! Friend of Socrates! What great truth!!!"

The foregoing faults are the most frequent and often recurring causes of trouble to transcribers, and can nearly always be got over by careful writing of outlines and good thoughtful study of the context when transcribing. (H. G. T. Moore—Paper read before the Borough Polytechnic Institute shorthand.)



## Used the Wrong Manuscript.

One of the very first missions that I was called upon to undertake as a junior reporter, was the reporting of a sermon by a great pillar of one of the churches. It meant a three miles walk over snow-covered country roads on a particularly unpleasant evening, and it also meant giving up a *tete-a-tete* with a singularly interesting young person whose sex and identity I feel justified in leaving to the reader's imagination. From past experience I felt pretty confident that I could save myself a lot of trouble by getting a colleague on another journal to borrow the preacher's manuscript at the close of the service. We struck a bargain accordingly. I spent a pleasant evening at a cosy fireside and was delighted next morning to find that my colleague had been true to his word—the manuscript of the sermon arrived by the first post. I wrote up a brilliant introduction, spoke about the eloquence of the discourse and the large congregation, and the paper came out with two columns, upon which (contrary to his wont) my editor was good enough to highly compliment me. Judge of my astonishment at receiving, two or three days later, a command to attend the editorial sanctum. Here I was confronted with an indignant letter from the reverend gentleman, in which he sarcastically alluded to our enterprise in describing a *service which was to take place a week later, and on printing a sermon delivered at quite another church by a minister of another denomination on an altogether different subject!* I felt that comment would be superfluous, and I appreciated that though speech may be silvery silence may sometimes be golden. It turned out that my colleague had also an appointment at the fireside, and that he trusted to a third person to beg the loan of the preacher's manuscript. By a singular coincidence, there were two ministers of the same name in that locality, and the wrong preacher was nobbled for the wrong sermon, which he cheerfully handed over. ("Recollections of a Reporter" in *East Kent Times*.)

## Shorthand Notes in the Witness-Box.

At the Assizes at Leeds, some interesting observations were made by Mr. Justice Grantham with reference to the important

question whether a witness may make use in the witness-box of shorthand notes for the purpose of refreshing his memory as to statements made at an interview on a past date. The case was that of *Reg. v. Laidlaw*, in which it appears that counsel for the defence objected that certain evidence tendered by a solicitor was inadmissible. At a trial which took place at Durham in Nov., the solicitor was allowed to refresh his memory by referring to shorthand notes of an interview that he had had with the prisoner; and it was contended that he was improperly allowed to do so. It should be stated that a shorthand clerk in the solicitor's employ had taken notes of the interview, and transcribed them immediately afterwards, and that the transcript had been revised by the solicitor "in the ordinary course of business." Sitting at Leeds in December, Mr. justice Grantham gave his judgment upon the application to state a case which is reported in the *Law Times* as follows:—

His Lordship said: With regard to the question before me I have no doubt that I rightly admitted the evidence, and I shall therefore decline to state a case. With reference to the question of the writing, the determining point in all these cases is whether or not the writing looked at by the witness can be relied on to accurately refresh his memory as to the facts thereby recorded, even when the memory of the witness is previously blank on the subject. It has been held in one case that a barrister, who has forgotten all about evidence given in a trial at which he was engaged, can look at his notes of the trial and then say, "As these notes are on my brief, and were made by me, I say that such and such evidence was given, or was not given, as the case may be, although I have no recollection of the case." (*Reg. v. Guinea*, reported in 1841.) Again a shorthand writer, who had duly taken down in shorthand the material parts of an address, and could only swear to the substantial accuracy of the remainder, was allowed to swear to the whole of his report of the proceedings before giving his evidence. Again, when original notes cannot be found, the witness may look at a copy of them, if he can swear positively from his own recollection, after looking at the copy, that it is correct. The case of a shorthand writer employed

by a solicitor is now so much a part of the daily work of his office, that if the reading of the account of his interviews with his clients, dictated by him to, and transcribed at once in longhand by the clerk, but read over by the solicitor some time after the occurrence enables him to say positively that such and such events did occur, no objection can be taken to his so refreshing his memory, and in his case the solicitor had looked at this record of the interview soon after he had held the interview with the client. The shorthand clerk is his *alter ego*, and almost part of himself. In all these cases it is the peculiar circumstances of each case that must be looked to to guide us in determining the question. It is not like the question of the admissibility of evidence: the writing or writings themselves are often not evidence at all. In this case the evidence of the solicitor, apart from the notes, is clearly admissible. He had looked at these shorthand notes soon after they had been made, and he had looked at them again when before the magistrates, and as his evidence before me could not have been excluded because he had on these occasions referred to his notes, and if he had wished to avoid all questions he could have looked at them the moment before he got into the witness-box, and if, as was the fact on those occasions, he could testify to the accuracy of the statements therein made, it would be the height of folly to compel him to give less accurate evidence than he could otherwise give if permitted to refresh his recollection in the way mentioned. For these reasons I decline to state a case. (Phonetic Journal.)

## Public Speakers as Readers.

"I always write out my quotations and read them," said a well-known popular preacher the other day to a reporter; "I do so in order that I may give them quite correctly. But I find that they are nearly always wrongly reported. This surprises me the more because, as a rule, the other portions of my sermons are usually reported with wonderful accuracy." The reporter explained why the quoted passages were so seldom rendered with the same fidelity that characterizes the remainder of the report. The preacher is one of

those men who address their congregations extempore, and employ as help nothing but the scantiest of notes. When he is speaking in this manner he speaks well. But as soon as he has resort to the written quotations, which he introduces to reinforce his own arguments, his voice drops. He is no longer perfectly audible. Whereas, everybody in his large congregation can hear the other parts of the address, very few of them can hear the whole of any of his quotations. A reporter sitting near the preacher, accustomed to listening to him, skilled in hearing many speakers of various types, is rarely able to catch the quoted words. The preacher is a splendid speaker, but a poor reader. And in this respect he resembles very many other men. The failing is indeed a common one. Unfortunately it is one of which those who suffer from it are mostly unconscious.

Why is it that so many otherwise able speakers are unsuccessful as readers? There is no inherent antagonism between the two accomplishments—speaking and reading. Barristers, who cannot in any circumstances read their speeches before judges and juries, and who must perforce speak extemporaneously, are generally good readers. This is particularly the case on the Chancery side of the High Court, where a great part of the argument, in many cases, turns upon the meaning of previous decisions, and their bearing upon the question at the moment before the Court. Long passages are read from reports of old cases; they have to be read so that the judge and the other counsel engaged in the case can hear them distinctly; there is an absolute necessity to read so as to make oneself heard perfectly; and the attempt is rarely unsuccessful. That the reading is often very rapid would be a drawback to the reporter who should try to take down the passage in full: but even that would be a lesser evil than indistinctness. The barrister recognises that he has to cultivate the art of reading well in addition to the art of speaking well; and his success as a reader is due entirely to that fact. It is feared that the same importance is not attached to the art of reading in the training of some of our ministers.

There are, and there have been, conspicuous examples of public men, who combine the two accomplishments. Gladstone could employ his marvellous voice with equal effect when speaking without notes, and when reading. Spurgeon had the same power. Ruskin, although his voice was not naturally very strong, was a magnificent reader. To hear him read one of his own written addresses was an experience that those who were so fortunate as to enjoy will never forget. It mattered not whether it was his own splendid English, or some favourite quotation from Homer or Chaucer that he was rendering, there was the same clear pronunciation, the same fine musical ring, the same careful attention to emphasis, and, on the part of his hearers, the same keen sense of delight. The three men whom we have named were exceptional men. But good reading does not come by nature : it is the result of training and practice. What Gladstone, and Spurgeon, and Ruskin achieved on a grand scale is possible to others. They were men who never spared pains, and it is quite possible for other people to take pains to master the art of reading well. The first thing is to recognise that the training is necessary, and that it is worth obtaining. Good readers make their delivery in reading resemble their delivery in speaking. There is a knack of taking in a whole sentence at a glance, raising the eyes from the book, and speaking the sentence. All good readers acquire this, and everybody can acquire it. The shorthand reporter has moments when he wishes devoutly that everybody would acquire it. (*Phonetic Journal*.)

### **Does the Reporter improve Speeches ?**

This question is suggested by the legal proceedings respecting copyright in the speeches of our distinguished orators, about which Lord Rosebery humorously expressed the opinion that, until the disputed proprietorship is settled by the highest voice in the land, it would be premature, nay almost criminal for anyone to add to this species of indeterminate property. The idea of our public speakers showing a coy reserve in making speeches to the public, on account of the unsatisfactory state of the law of copyright regarding their

orations, is too dreadful for contemplation by those practitioners of the phonographic art who find, let us hope, a sufficiently remunerative occupation in placing the eloquence of our great men before an expectant public, without (on the part of the note-takers) any very great anxiety as to who enjoys the right of property in the speeches.

There are, however, a good many degrees in the reporter's work. His most important duty is to give to the public reports in the first person, known as full reports, of distinguished men. But, in fact, though the professional shorthand writer may be engaged every day in taking verbatim notes of speeches and reproducing them fully this kind of work by no means commonly falls to the lot of the newspaper reporter. Let us consider what would happen if verbatim reports were the rule in newspapers. An ordinary County or Town Council meeting would extend to two or three pages of a newspaper; a small political or other gathering would need a page. Half-a-dozen meetings would, in fact, fill a newspaper, leaving no room for leaders, and telegraphic and sporting news. This piece of elucidation may be thought unnecessary, but it is really not so, for even among phonographers there are many who imagine that everything said in public is faithfully recorded in the newspapers. Whether, therefore, reporters improve speeches or not, it is abundantly evident that their labours in the direction of condensation are considerable. Under their manipulation the mighty balloon of oratorical gas is reduced to a shape no bigger than one's hand.

But in dealing with public speakers who have no pretensions to rank with our brilliant and polished orators, other arts beside that of condensation are exercised by the reporter. Even the fragments of the speeches which are selected for reproduction call for the exercise of the reporter's powers of composition in converting them into a connected whole; errors in grammar need to be rectified; and the speaker's remarks require to be made generally intelligible. The reporter often finds himself, when engaged in transcription, looking down on a page of his note-book containing the verbatim record of a speaker's ideas on some topic of importance, expressed in an abso-

lutely incoherent form, which, if produced as uttered, would give rise to grave doubts as to the capability of the reporter. These facts indicate with sufficient plainness that the average oratory bears about the same relation to the published report which undressed wool does to ordinary broadcloth.

If such are the duties imposed on the scribe in dealing with public oratory of all descriptions, it is evident that the question, Does the reporter improve speeches? is one of no small importance. He no longer invents speeches, as was the custom with some non-stenographic reporters until a few years ago, but he works conscientiously on the material he has in his note-book. In a general way the public has little opportunity of judging as to the merits of the reporter's work, but there is an important section of the community, namely the speakers, which is able to form an excellent opinion on the subject. Their testimony, both direct and indirect, is very much in the reporter's favour. Speakers thank him for his efforts when occasion offers, and, when a quotation is made from their reported remarks, they, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, state that they have been correctly reported. (*Phonetic Journal*.)

## **Argument and matter, the real criterion of the worth of a Speech and not the mere name of the Speaker.**

Every public man in this country owed a debt of gratitude to the reporters. Every public man in this country, was, to a large extent, dependent upon the reporters, and the results of intelligent reporting might, in the next century, produce rather a revolution which perhaps might not be welcome to all of our public men. At the present time we asked, "Who spoke?" rather than "What was said?" He was not at all sure that an intelligent reporter might not occasionally be very much inclined to suppress matter flowing from the eloquent lips of certain speakers, and be tempted to insert very good matter spoken by speakers who were less well-known. He admitted that he had often heard speeches made by unknown

men which were so admirable that he had regretted that a wider public had not been able to read those speeches. He was very often struck with the admirable way in which men fresh from the Universities approached subjects of great importance, both with regard to the matter and with regard to the form in which they delivered their speeches. He was not at all sure that intelligent reporters would not be able to educate the public in such a manner that they would read speeches more on account of the argument and the matter than on account of the name of the person who delivered the speech. He said that out of sheer justice to those persons who very often took infinite trouble over their speeches, and he was afraid that unknown speakers very often did take more trouble with the matter than known speakers. (The Right Hon. Lord Reay at the Annual Meeting and Distribution of Prizes—Pitman's Metropolitan School.)

## Verbatim Reporting in America.

The methods adopted by a corps of English reporters in producing verbatim reports are tolerably familiar to our readers. We quote below an interesting account of how similar work is done in America, the particular meeting reported having been a gathering of the democratic National Committee in Chicago. The smallness of the staff of reporters will surprise English shorthand writers.

The meeting was called to order, and the speaking began at 8 o'clock in the evening, and Mr. W. J. Bryan, the last speaker, concluded his address at 11.30 o'clock. The *New York Sun* published the speeches in its first edition, going to press at 1 o'clock in the morning, which means 12 o'clock in Chicago. The Chicago papers had the speeches in type before midnight, every line being in their first editions.

Four shorthand reporters were employed in this work, and they were assisted by three typewriter operators, two men to handle copy, and about a dozen messenger boys. At 8.15 the papers began to receive the copy, and from that time until the conclusion of the



meeting instalments of the speeches left the auditorium for the papers every three minutes.

Of course this work is accomplished in the most systematic manner. For the purpose of explanation, we will name the shorthand men Black, White, Green, and Brown, the first-named in charge of the work. A room is secured for the typewriter operators back of the stage, and a schedule is made, containing the letters of the alphabet, on which each reporter had to register. Black reports the first "take" of three minutes, and is relieved by White. He immediately goes to the schedule and writes his name after the letter "A," dictates his "take" to an operator, numbering the first page "A 1," his second page "A 2," and so on, and at the bottom of the last page writes, "B 1 follows." When the second man, White, has taken three minutes, he is relieved by Green, and he does the same as the first shorthand reporter, Black, but takes the letter "B," numbering his pages "B 1," and so forth, making the note at the bottom of the last page "C 1 follows." Green, the third shorthand man, at the expiration of three minutes, is relieved by the fourth shorthand writer, Brown. He registers opposite the letter "C," and numbers his pages accordingly, making the note at the bottom of his transcript "D 1 follows." By the time that Brown has completed his three minutes, Black, the first shorthand man, is written up and relieves him. Brown takes the letter "D," while Black, who follows him, takes "E," and so on until the meeting is concluded. When the alphabet is gone through, "AA," "BB," "CC," etc., are used and if the alphabet is again gone through, "AAA," etc., comes next. When the last speaker of the evening addresses the audience, the takes are shortened to two minutes, and even to one minute, so that, when he has finished, the last man has seldom more than fifty words to transcribe.

At that meeting forty copies were made. It was the first time that an experiment was undertaken to turn out so many copies in so short a time, and was a test to determine whether such a thing were possible. The typewriter operators, instead of using carbons for

duplicating, took the dictation on a stencil similar to that used on a mimeograph. This stencil was placed on a cyclograph, a new duplicating invention which has a capacity of 1,000 copies in five minutes. It took less than one second to make the forty copies on this machine, and as fast as they were made they were handed to messenger boys, who delivered them to the papers or the telegraph operators who were sending them out to the out-of-town papers. The last fifty words were given the telegraphers before Mr. Bryan, who uttered them, had concluded shaking hands with the people on the stage. (*Phonetic Journal.*)

### **Lord Macaulay's Speeches — The other side of the shield.**

In 1853 I was drawn into an epistolary controversy with Mr. Macaulay in reference to an edition of his speeches which I had collected and published. Subsequently, the distinguished essayist and historian rated me so soundly in print for my share in this transaction that I was induced to take counsel's opinion as to whether an action for libel would lie. The reply was in the affirmative, but I was warned at the same time that it was doubtful whether any of the judges would venture to sum up against the great man, consequently all idea of seeking legal redress had to be abandoned. Mr. Macaulay's parliamentary speeches, I should mention, had been taken from "Hansard's Debates," and Mr. Hansard had been paid his own demand for the privilege. At my interview with Mr. Hansard I learnt from him that before any speech was published in "the Debates" a proof was invariably sent to the M. P. who had delivered it, and who returned the proof if any correction were necessary within a certain number of weeks; otherwise it was assumed, in accordance with an understanding of which all the members were cognisant, that the speech might put to press as it stood. I mention this because Mr. Macaulay based his indignation against me on a misrepresentation of his own to the effect that I had charged myself with editing his orations; whereas, so far as the parliamentary speeches were concerned, I had simply undertaken to

reprint them verbatim from "Hausard," which in those days was commonly accepted in the House of Commons as an unimpeachable authority.

In an edition which Mr. Macaulay himself subsequently prepared of his speeches, which he professed to have merely revised while materially altering them to suit his more recent opinions, he took special exception to the report published in "Hansard" of a speech he had delivered on the Dissenters' Chapel Bill, and put forward an amended version of his own; justifying this mode of dealing with speeches, the accuracy of which for twenty or thirty years had passed unchallenged, by the following piece of special pleading. "I do not pretend to give with accuracy the diction of these speeches which I did not myself correct within a week after they were delivered. Many expressions, and a few paragraphs linger in my memory. But the rest, including much that had been carefully premeditated, is irrevocably lost . . . . My delivery is, I believe, too rapid. Able shorthand writers have complained that they could not follow me, and . . . as I am unable to recall the precise words which I used, I have done my best to put my memory into words which I might have used." This was Mr. Macaulay's complacent justification for changing the language of the speeches included in the collection made by himself, but he was silent as to his reason for omitting his famous oration in favour of the ballot, and his three speeches reflecting upon Sir James Graham for the opening of Mazzini's letters at the Post Office. The reason is, however, not far to seek. The whigs, when in office, scouted the idea of the ballot, and as for Sir James Graham, he had veered round to whiggery since Thomas Slingsley Duncombe assailed him for tampering in the interest of Austria with Mazzini's correspondence. I am unaware whether Mr. Macaulay spoke as rapidly in private, where, as is well-known, he commonly monopolised all the conversation—as he represents himself as doing in Parliament, but I remember that Lord Brougham, who was sufficiently loquacious himself, spitefully compared Macaulay's incessant flow of talk to the chatter of ten

parrots and a chime of bells. (*Henry Visdell-Glances back through seventy years.*) \*

## Imperfect education of Reporters is the true reason of the utter rubbish they make of their transcripts.

" *Thoroughly good education* is of *vital* importance to a reporter or shorthand writer. My experience is that *only* an ordinary 'plain' education will *never* enable *anyone* to become a *first-class reporter*. If he knows nothing but 'the three R's' he will constantly find himself 'stuck' and hopelessly staring, like a stuck pig's head, at the speaker. A Latin, French, and other quotation will slip by him 'like oil' (as a friend of mine says) and his omission of this one phrase may (I have often known such cases) take the gilt out of the remainder of a most eloquent speech. Sometimes a speaker will make a quotation from a classical author very seldom read, in which case it is pardonable for the reporter to ask the speaker the source of the quotation. My advice to reporters is—learn Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, and German, all the *languages* you can, but particularly Latin and French. They will prove amazing helps, and even a little Greek is not to be despised, and some Anglo-Saxon is almost indispensable. A reporter should be an incessant *reader*, and he cannot be too well informed. Nearly every case of a 'breakdown' that I have noticed, has occurred through the reporter being ignorant of the subject under discussion ; and not from his want of stenographic ability. He gets taken by surprise, by *ideas* new and strange to his mind, and is soon helplessly and hopelessly in the rear. The great number of *imperfectly educated* reporters is the true reason of the utter rubbish they make of their *transcripts*. The reporter must, to a very large extent, *educate himself* by his own research, reading, and private study. The possession of the mere ability to follow a rapid speaker is by no means the *sine qua non* to a reporter. If he depends upon *that*, he

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\* *Vide* Page 258 as to Lord Macaulay's version of this incident about his *speeches*.

will never succeed." "I have taken several committees and commissions for this (Cape Town) Government, and find the work profitable, but very arduous. Nothing less than taking every word will do for such work." (Autobiography of Mr. J. L. Cobbin of Cape Town.)

### **Serious risk in supplying copy of a Speech to a Reporter in advance.**

A speaker who hands a copy of his oration to the press some time before it is delivered, runs the risk of appearing in a somewhat ridiculous position, should his speech by any accident not be delivered, if the reporter has filled in the applause with which it might have been received, and published it. In the French President's tour, in 1897 an undelivered speech of a local notable was reported to have been received with "murmurs of approval," "marks of approbation," "repeated bravos," "violent applause," and finally "prolonged approbation." There have been not a few similar instances nearer home but such contretemps would not have been subjects of amusement had the reporters abstained from industriously inserting the "applause." (*Phonetic Journal*.)

### **Mr. Gladstone as a Speaker.**

The great statesman whose death has been mourned by a nation—nay by an Empire—was, by universal agreement, a great orator. Men who rejected his political ideas, who thought his conduct of the affairs of this country perilous, and men who applauded his every act, were at one in bearing testimony to the fascination of his oratory. It was not, perhaps, the most perfect style known to Parliament during the past half-century. Many critics are prepared to say that it was not equal to that of John Bright. It had a quality of its own, and its singular effectiveness is proved by the wonderful influence that it exerted over all who came under its sway. Mr. Gladstone gave the reporters plenty of hard work during his long public career. His great speeches inside and outside the House of Commons were numero us. When he spoke, the pencils of all the shorthand reporters became active ; and his words were transmitted

to all parts of the globe. He was always intensely in earnest, though his speeches were often illumined with a certain playfulness. He had a marvellous mastery of details, and could handle them in such a manner, and embellish them so skilfully with his eloquence, that he made even his Budget speeches full of interest and sometimes of charm. He had a mind that revelled in fine distinctions, distinctions that crowded upon him in the middle of his sentences, so that parenthetical remarks abound in his speeches; but with the true instinct of the orator he always steered his sentences safely to their intended termination. He was a great orator, for he succeeded in moving the House of Commons, which has been described, and truly described, as the most severe audience in the world.

From the reporter's point of view he was a good speaker. He had not cultivated the modern conversational manner that varies from hesitating audibility to rapid inaudibility: like Bright and Beaconsfield, men whose styles were essentially different from his own and like others of what is now called "the old school," he spoke slowly, deliberately, and impressively; and the pleasure which the public experienced in listening to his words was felt by the reporters in taking them down. His diction was not so largely composed of purely Saxon elements as was that of Bright; and he had not the facility of his great opponent, Lord Beaconsfield, of summing up a policy, or a criticism, in a pithy, epigrammatic phrase that tickled the popular fancy and lingered in the public mind. But he was none the less effective as an orator. His personality, his obvious sincerity, his earnestness, his zeal: these things spoke in his speeches, and contributed largely to his success as an orator. But his splendid voice, his great command of the resources of his native tongue, and his ability to make every word tell, whether he was speaking in the House on the introduction of a measure of the first importance, or addressing a vast audience during a public election campaign, or speaking at a moment's notice to a gathering of admirers congregated at a wayside railway station: these were the characteristics that the brethren of the shorthand fraternity noticed

most readily, and they, too, are unanimous in regarding him as one of the great orators of the century.

In connection with parliamentary reporting it is interesting to note that upwards of twenty years ago Mr. Gladstone expressed himself in the House of Commons as favourable to the adoption of a system of Official Reports. He thought it important that a full record of the debates in the House of Parliament should be preserved, and he was not at all alarmed at the prediction so confidently made by opponents of the change, that it would lead to increased loquacity on the part of members of Parliament. He thought that it would produce no such effect; but in any case his voice was raised in 1877 in support of a system that would ensure the existence of a full report where otherwise a full report—relying on the ability and willingness of the newspapers to give it—was then very doubtful and uncertain, even on the greatest occasions. A passage in his speech in the House of Commons in the year just named throws an interesting light on the change which had come over Parliamentary reporting by the newspapers during his own career. "Forty years ago," he said, "anyone who was called upon to exercise the irksome task of correcting his own speeches had afforded to him by the Press of that time an amount of assistance which he does not now enjoy." Then, Mr. Gladstone said, "there were four or five papers which gave verbatim reports, but at the time at which he spoke only two morning papers even aimed at verbatim reports." (*Phonetic Journal*.)

### Reminiscences of Mr. Gladstone.

I do not remember having spoken to Mr. Gladstone in my life; but, like many of my countrymen similarly circumstanced, I cannot help regarding his loss as a personal one. I have so often seen him, listened to his wonderful oratory, and transferred it to my notebook, feeling the while I was securing a precious possession not only for myself but for others, that I find it difficult to realize that the tongue that always found such ready and effective utterance on almost every topic of human interest is silent, that those noble

features whose continual play added so much charm to the spoken words, are withdrawn from mortal sight. My thoughts are almost naturally turned in this direction, writing as I am in my own sick room, where I have been long a prisoner, on the morning of the funeral in Westminster Abbey to which the eyes of the whole civilized world are directed.

Now that my own note-taking days are probably at an end, I find it pleasant, occasionally to recall some of the many speeches of celebrated men whom I have reported, and the circumstances under which they were delivered; but there are certainly none that afford me more interesting reminiscences than those of the distinguished statesman, whose remains a grateful and sorrowing nation has consigned to the tomb. To have the opportunity of reporting his speeches, I always regarded as a personal pleasure and privilege. It was never otherwise than a moral and intellectual treat. The happy selection of words, apparently unpremeditated, seemed almost like an inspiration; while the deep earnestness with which every sentence was sent home and made to tell could hardly fail to impress the most indifferent listener. Under ordinary circumstances a shorthand writer is far too intent upon his notes, and the transcript that has to be made of them, to wax enthusiastic about the sentiments he is recording, or the manner of their delivery. And it is well that it should be so. He wants a cool head and a steady hand; and unless he has the emotional part of his nature under reasonable control, the efficiency of his work may be impaired and his peace of mind seriously disturbed. One occasionally sees a young journalist at a reporter's table revealing his inexperience by exclamations of approval and dissent and other expressions of personal predilection, which are singularly out of place and extremely annoying to his more self-suppressing colleagues. A reporter should, for his own sake as well as out of consideration for others, be as little demonstrative as possible. An old hand bottles up any enthusiasm that he may chance to have, and reserves it for expressions on an appropriate occasion. Very few speakers awaken any such sentiment in him; if they do, their oratorical powers must be of the first order. It has been said that a speaker



achieves no greater triumph than when he arouses emotion in the occupants of the reporter's table. If there was ever anyone who could accomplish this feat, it was the great Liberal leader. That, at least, has been my own experience. We are too familiar with the tricks of the platform, and see too much behind the scenes to be captivated by superficial displays of eloquence, notwithstanding the ringing cheers with which they may be greeted. Those fluent phrases awaken within us no rapture ; those elaborate sentences, supposed to be uttered on the spur of the moment—we know well enough how studiously and laboriously they have been moulded, and that they are probably in manuscript in the speaker's pocket. There was no display in Gladstone, not an atom of pretence. His speeches were the genuine expression of himself. However lofty the sentiments he expressed, one could not help feeling that they were his own, and the feeling was strengthened as the years went on, and his own life, which was necessarily patent to all the world, told the tale of his unselfish devotion to the interests of his fellow-creatures.

I think the first time I heard him speak was as far back as the early fifties. I cannot remember the precise date. He was then in the prime of manhood. The occasion was a meeting somewhere in the City, held in support of the educational work of Mr. Rogers, afterwards known as "Hang theology Rogers." I had only known Mr. Gladstone by reputation ; his fame as a public man and a brilliant speaker had been well established, and I had formed high expectations, which were more than realized. I was greatly struck with the earnestness of his manner, the pleasant tone of his voice, the ease of his delivery, and the singularly happy selection of his phrases, some of which indeed linger in my memory to the present day.

The next occasion on which I reported him was the delivery of one of his early Budget speeches in the House of Commons, when I had the opportunity of witnessing the manner in which he was wont to make the dry bones of finance live, and give to an exposition of figures, the fascination of a romance or a poem. This was the only time when I reported Gladstone in Parliament. Indeed I was but rarely

engaged in the "Gallery." I had never sought any permanent occupation there, having my time too fully taken up with other work, but I at times accepted engagements for some special occasions, and this was one of them. I did not report the entire speech, which lasted for some hours, but took my turn with the other note-takers in the ordinary way.

In later years I reported several of Mr. Gladstone's election speeches at Greenwich. He was in excellent form, and speaking in the open air, his clear, ringing voice must have been distinctly heard by his most distant auditors. It was in one of these speeches that he indulged in a little humorous by-play, which so rarely characterized his public utterances. Disraeli had recently taunted the Liberal Government with having a policy of plundering and blundering. Gladstone, in criticizing some of his opponent's doings in connection with the Straits Settlements, drew an amusing picture of the perplexities in which they had become involved, adding (I remember writing down the words as if it were but yesterday), "and there in the Straits I leave them foundering and foundering."

Perhaps one of the most striking of Gladstone's speeches that it fell to my lot to report was that delivered at the great meeting held in St. James's Hall on "The Eastern Question," on 8th December, 1876. Mr. Justin McCarthy describes it as "one of the most powerful and impassioned, and, at the same time, convincing speeches I have ever heard, even from his lips." I reported the proceedings for the official record. The occasion was a memorable one, the public had been stirred to its depths by Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet on "Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East," and the profound impression it had created was intensified by his magnificent address. It will be remembered that the great statesman had only a short time previously retired from his leadership, mainly on the plea of advancing years (he was then sixty-five), but the Eastern "atrocities" brought him to the front again. He suspended the theological and other studies to which he had been devoting himself with his

accustomed energy, and threw himself heart and soul into the new movement against the Ottoman Government, and made the memorable declaration that the only way to do any lasting good for the Christian population of Turkey was to turn out the Turkish officials "bag and baggage." How he again became Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer is matter of history.

I remember attending several deputations to Mr. Gladstone during his official career. One of these was at Downing street and another at his own house. In the case of the latter, he had expressed a desire that as few persons as possible should attend, and said it would be agreeable to himself if, instead of a large contingent of reporters being admitted, the work could be entrusted to one person who should represent for the occasion the entire press of the country. This arrangement was carried out, and I was requested to undertake the duty.

On another occasion I was asked to attend at Mr. Gladstone's house for the purpose of taking down from his dictation a speech which he desired to re-deliver. It had been originally addressed to the House of Commons, and was to be published as a pamphlet. It had been reported in the papers, but Mr. Gladstone was not satisfied with any of the reports, not even that in the *Times*; and he suggested that an expert shorthand writer should be sent to him in order that he might go over the ground again, making such corrections and additions as he might find necessary. Unfortunately for myself, I was out of town at the time, and one of my senior assistants had to take my place. I need hardly say that I should have fulfilled the task with the greatest pleasure and satisfaction. My assistant gave me a glowing account of his experience. With the *Times* report in his hand, Mr. Gladstone dictated his speech clearly and distinctly, stopping every now and then to supply a gap, and occasionally commenting on the circumstance that several important sentences had been omitted. All went on smoothly for a while, when the sky became suddenly overcast, and a thunderstorm.

arose of great severity, accompanied by vivid flashes of lightning. This proved inconvenient both for dictator and dictatee. Mr. Gladstone asked his scribe whether he would continue the work, or suspend the operation for a while till the storm should have passed. He replied that he was quite willing to adopt either course, according to Mr. Gladstone's own convenience. The thunder was really very loud and constant, and it was thought better to wait until it had ceased. Thereupon followed a pleasant half hour's chat. Mr. Gladstone had detected by his accent my assistant's Scottish nationality, and was soon making all sorts of inquiries as to the place of his birth and his early associations, and extracting what information he could as to the localities named, with all of which he seemed to be perfectly familiar. I would have given anything for that half hour's intercourse, and should have been profoundly grateful to the thunderstorm for giving it to me ; but it was not so to be. The storm ended, the work was resumed, and I had the comfort of knowing that it met with Mr. Gladstone's satisfaction and approval.

I think the last occasion on which I reported Mr. Gladstone was at a Nonconformist meeting at the Memorial Hall. His powers were then failing ; his voice was weaker ; but there was the same bright flash of the eye, the same impressiveness of manner, the same tenacity of purpose, the same eloquence of gesture with which I had long been familiar.

As a rule Mr. Gladstone was not a difficult speaker to report. He certainly was not rapid (though I have often seen statements to the contrary), except perhaps in occasional passages, or when the speaking was of a conversational character. The construction of his sentences was almost faultless, and I rarely found it necessary to alter a word. In later years his style became, perhaps, a little more involved ; but in my own experience I do not remember to have had any trouble in transcribing my notes arising out of any obscurity of diction.

It is said that Gladstone "knew something of everything"; but I never heard that he had acquired a knowledge of shorthand. If he had, it would, no doubt, have been in his younger days before the advent of Phonography, and he must have learned one of the older systems. (Mr. T. A. Reed in the *Phonetic Journal*.)

## The perils of Reporters.

The ordinary work of the reporter—the taking down and transcription of notes—is not altogether without peril of a peculiar kind. Unless he is continually on the alert, he may easily fall into the most absurd blunders, as for instance, the case in which a reporter made an ex-Cabinet Minister, when speaking of his opponent, say that he "had not a white shirt to cover himself." What the speaker had really said was that his opponent had "not even a white sheet with which to cover the policy," etc. I once knew a reporter who in his account of a lecture on "Martin Luther," made the speaker assert that during a serious illness the Reformer "was kept alive by the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding." That report cost the reporter his appointment. A case was heard at a county court only a few months ago, in which a reporter sued a newspaper proprietor for a month's salary in lieu of notice. In the course of the hearing specimens of the reporter's "copy" were produced, and in one instance he had written of the "cemetery" of the human form. Needless to say the plaintiff did not succeed in his action (*Cassell's Saturday Journal*.)

## Reporters falling in the habit of slovenly note-taking.

Dr. Robertson Nicoll, in his article on the New Journalism in the *Temple Magazine* for November 1898, says the new journalist "must be able to go, for instance, to a great banquet, and, possibly without taking a note, to give in half a column so true an account of the doings and speeches there, that all can understand what went on." This reminds the present writer of an incident which he observed many years ago, and

which quite prepared him to learn soon afterwards that Mr. W. H. Mudford had been appointed managing editor of the *Standard*, on which journal he had previously been Parliamentary reporter. The writer was sent up from a provincial town to report fully a dinner given at the Bridge House Hotel to Mr. C. Lewis, sometime M. P. for Londonderry, in recognition of his services as organizer of Conservatism in Kent. Next to the writer was Mr. Mudford, who had on the table before him a few sheets of quarto note-paper, with a narrow margin folded at one side. He wrote with a pen, and occasionally jotted down a shorthand note in one of the margins. When the speeches were finished, Mr. Mudford's longhand report was finished too. He drank a cup of coffee, called a cab, and so conveyed his report to the *Standard* office. The writer (then quite young), who had to do a full-page report before he reached home, ready for his routine sub-editor's work in the morning, sat up the whole night in the hotel bedroom, with the feverish head and cold feet to which all journalists are not strangers. He had filled a large note-book with his shorthand notes, and came from time to time across obscure passages at important points in his verbatim record. He left blanks there, hoping to make them good in the train on the homeward journey. At London Bridge Station he bought a *Standard*, and in the magnificent—there is no other word for it—three-quarters of a column summary which Mr. Mudford had written, under the conditions already described, the writer found, in each instance, the *ipsissima verba* which were missing from, or obscure in, his own intended verbatim shorthand note. He heard soon afterwards that Mr. Mudford had become managing editor of the *Standard*. 'And deserved it, too,' was his inward exclamation." The moral of the above anecdote seems to us to be that the young reporter should take particular care not to fall into a slovenly habit of note-taking, by writing badly or imperfectly formed characters which cannot be transcribed with any certainty an hour or two after they are written. Mr. T. A. Reed's earliest reporting notes are as easily read to-day as when first written, and every shorthand writer ought to be able to say the same of his notes. (*The Christian Million*.)

## Conditions essential to faithful Law Reporting.

It is an erroneous though common belief that the duties of a reporter are simply to take down and furnish a transcript of all, and exactly what he hears, and that the merit of a report consists in its being an exact record of every word uttered by the speaker. The fact is that the exact words of an address are very rarely preserved. Of the great majority of even the better class of our public speakers, whether at the bar, on the rostrum, or in the pulpit, few are able to speak extemporaneously in such a manner that they would be willing to see a verbatim report of their words in print. Their sentences must often be remodeled, and occasionally the wording of entire speeches may be said to be almost exclusively the work of the reporter. For this reason facility of composition is a qualification of the greatest importance to him. Good judgment is also absolutely indispensable—indeed, it often happens that a poor stenographer, with judgment, makes a better reporter than a good stenographer, who lacks in that respect. Now, this is especially the case in law reporting, because in this, as in all other legal matters, so much depends upon mere form. The professional law reporter should be conversant with the ordinary legal forms and expressions, particularly those that are met with in trials; and, if he happens to be himself a well-read lawyer, it will enable him to make all the better reports.

The proper reporting of objections, motions, and rulings requires more judgment and experience than any other part of the duties of the law reporter. If counsel would always state in so many words the grounds of their objections, little or no difficulty would be experienced, but oftentimes a long argument is made, from the whole of which the reporter is obliged to eliminate the gist of the objection, and to put it in proper legal phraseology. It will not do to take down and write out just the words of the counsel, for this would frequently render the report very voluminous, and at the same time subject the party who orders it to much unnecessary expense. It would therefore seem that some knowledge of the rules of evidence

is an almost indispensable qualification of the law reporter.

In ordinary civil trials the reporter has generally nothing to do with the impanneling of the jury ; but in criminal trials this is a very important matter, and should be carefully reported. It is always well to take notes of the opening remarks of counsel, for, although they are seldom ever required to be written out, they will sometimes throw light on obscure or doubtful portions of the testimony, and enable the writer to ascertain whether he has correctly reported the language of the question or answer. Great care should be taken to report every word on the examination of witnesses ; and in transcribing, their exact language, whether grammatical or ungrammatical, should be preserved ; and if any words are mispronounced, that fact should also be indicated if possible. By this means, on an appeal, the judges will be able to form a better judgment of the weight that should be attached to the evidence of the respective witnesses in the court below, than if all were made, by means of corrections, to speak with equal propriety. The language of the questions of counsel, however, may be frequently improved when it can be done without introducing any material alterations. It is not usual to report the summing up of the counsel, unless they expressly order it. The judge's charge, however, should be very carefully taken, as oftentimes, great interests may be hazarded by a very slight error or change in its verbiage. (*James Munson--The Complete Phonographer.*)

## **Intellectual outfit of a Reporter should be vast and varied.**

Important and absolutely indispensable as efficient shorthand writing undoubtedly is for newspaper work, there can, therefore, be no greater mistake than that of looking upon other qualifications as being of little consequence so long as this one essential has been acquired. The calls upon the Pressman for accurately representing the thoughts, words, and actions of others are so many-sided that



here, if anywhere, Pope's famous line—"a little learning is a dangerous thing"—does not apply. A little knowledge of many things is for the journalist a distinct advantage, because the general knowledge required for his work rests upon a negative rather than upon a positive basis. He is not required to know enough of any one subject to distinguish himself therein, but he should, at least, know just enough of the rudiments of a number of things, to save himself from ridiculously misrepresenting the man who is so distinguished. Much knowledge of the world, and of many things therein, he will, of course, become familiar with in the course of daily practice and observation, but there are certain elements of education and fitness which should form part of the original outfit of the young journalist.

Next to dealing with a mass of shorthand notes when taken—to be referred to more fully hereafter—I would place facility in writing good English, a familiarity with the ordinary rules of grammatical construction and punctuation, and the faculty of readily expressing his own ideas and recording facts in clear, concise order and appropriate language. How important this combined faculty of aptness for composition and clear orderly arrangement of facts is, will be seen when it is remembered that, excepting for verbatim reporting, the reporter's mind is the medium through which the thoughts, ideas, and arguments of others have to pass, and that the form in which they will be placed before the newspaper reader will depend largely upon the degree of this faculty which the reporter may possess.

Next to facility in writing good English, the reporter may look to some knowledge of other languages as an advantage. The tendency to adorn public speeches with quotations from the classics, and especially from Latin authors, which was so common a feature in the early years of this century, may be much less marked in these days of utilitarian speech, but still such quotations do occur, and some knowledge of Latin and French cannot fail to be of advantage—enough Latin, at least, to be able to record ordinary quotations, and the ability to read a little French.

Leading authors of Ancient Greece and Rome, the chief characters in classical mythology, great rulers, great battles, famous men, places, and things in the history of the world ; leaders of great revolutionary movements, the turning points of history, such as the Civil War under Cromwell and the Commonwealth, American Independence, the French Revolution, the Civil War between the North and South in America, the fall of the French Monarchy and founding of the present Republic ; also leading authors whose writings have influenced men's minds in modern times, as John Stuart Mill and political economy, Darwin and evolution, Ruskin and art, Carlyle and the dignity of labour, Newman and the Oxford movement ; modern historians, such as Macaulay and J. R. Green, who wrote history from the point of view of the people—these are some of the names of men and things which have a way of frequently turning up in public speeches and writings with which the journalist may have to deal, and he should know something of their place in history and why they fill it. For the same reason the leading English poets, from Shakespeare to Tennyson, and typical American poets, such as Longfellow, Whittier, and Lowell, are so frequently drawn upon that familiarity with the character of their chief writings is called for. Happily this kind of knowledge is much more accessible than formerly ; and books containing information upon these and kindred topics are within reach of the most slender purses. A knowledge of music is always an advantage to the reporter, and this, too, may be easily and pleasantly acquired.

Undoubtedly a most serviceable qualification for the journalist is a familiarity with the political history of his own country, and to some extent of neighbouring countries, within comparatively recent times. So many conditions of our social and political life of to-day took their rise from the first Reform Bill of sixty years ago, the Repeal of the Corn Laws a few years later, and other measures of Reform during the early years of the Victorian Era, that special attention to the history of this period by the would-be journalist will be well repaid. An equally important qualification, and one

which is accessible to all, is a knowledge of the world as reflected from day to day in the newspapers.

Besides the journalist's outfit which I have roughly indicated as being obtainable by effort and by observation, certain other talents which belong to what a man inherits, are needful for a successful journalist. Foremost of these is quickness of apprehension and the faculty of seeing and seizing upon the essential facts in any speech, document, or event with which he is called upon to deal. He should not be a violent partisan—it is quite possible to serve a party paper and yet be fair in reporting as far as he goes—and still less should he be a cynic. Above all things the young journalist must be alive, must be one who feels that the many points of contact with life impress him vividly, and enable him to impress them upon others. (*Alfred Kingston—Pitman's Popular guide to Journalism.*)

## **Reporters always flounder for want of familiarity with technicalities of law and procedure in Law Court reporting.**

Causes of action in a County Court are so various, and sometimes involve abstruse legal and technical points so difficult to follow, that the young reporter will require to have all his wits about him to grasp what is essential. A foreclosure action between mortgagee and mortgagor; a breach of warranty in a horse deal; a claim by a Railway Company for demurrage, or against a Railway Company for damage to goods in transit; an interpleader action in which a third party claims the oyster, and leaves to the nominal litigants the shell; garnishee orders affecting the property of a debtor; claims for agistment of cattle, and disputes about copyholds; transfer of property, and attornment of tenants—these are a few of the things about which legal arguments between judge and solicitors sometimes arise, and are carried on at great length. In the majority of County Court actions the points of importance are simple enough, but in those which fall into the foregoing category, when they do

arise, the reporter will at first stand a fair chance of getting bewildered. The sooner he gets to learn what some of these things mean, and the closer he follows the cases, and acquires the habit of seizing intelligible points necessary to make of his report a consistent story, the better. If he attends carefully to the solicitor or barrister in opening the case, on either side, he will probably find that most of what is essential for him in the legal arguments that follow, will be in a very small compass. But whether the case be simple or difficult, his aim should be to understand at least the points contended for on either side, and present them so as to make what tells for and against the case, and the decision which follows, intelligible to readers of his paper. Sometimes the Judge will reserve his decision, in some specially complicated case, and either send it in writing to the Registrar, or deliver judgment at the next Court. In the former case, the reporter should make enquiries for it at the Court, and in the latter, take care to be present at the opening of the next Court, and in either case prepare a short summary of the facts of the case, to which the Judge's decision may be added.

An important detail connected with the County Court is that of getting correct names, place of abode, and particulars of claim. The names are called out by the Clerk of the Court, and sometimes get curiously distorted. "*Simkins v. Brand*" may be called, and the attendant at the door may be heard shouting to parties in waiting outside, "*Simmons v. Brown*," or, *Walters v. Farmer*, may become "*Walker v. Palmer*." If a solicitor is engaged, his opening statement will generally disclose names and particulars, but if not, and there is any doubt in any case, the reporter should take care to verify names, or the result may sometimes be unpleasant. (*Ibid.*)

## **In reporting untrained speakers Reporters are liable to trip:**

The trained speaker who has passed through the discipline of public life is generally much easier to follow than the untrained local speaker who follows him. In the oratory of the trained public speaker there is a natural sequence of ideas, and a gradual unfolding

of the substance of the speech, which make such a speaker comparatively easy to follow, even at a fairly high rate of speed, and a still greater pleasure to deal with in transcribing the notes taken.

The most dangerous of the secondary speakers for the young reporter is the local magnate sometimes met with, who comes with a prepared speech, bearing evident marks of frequent rehearsal. His position and local influence may be such that it is desirable for the local papers to report him pretty fully; the mere fact that the speech has been a studied effort will account for the introduction of quotations, with, perhaps, a stanza of poetry thrown in, and, as the whole is rattled off after the manner of a recitation, it is a severe strain upon the note-taker. If there should be any really important point dropped in such a speech, any connecting link which is necessary to give meaning to what cannot very well be omitted, then there is a consolation that such a speaker is generally accessible, and willing to supply any omission. Again, if the speaker is one whose principal points are supported by statistics the figures must be taken carefully and accurately. Here, again, there may occasionally be an excuse for troubling a speaker for verification afterwards, but, as a rule, the more the reporter makes himself independent of such aids the better. With the diffuse and involved speaker the trouble is of a different kind, for the reporter is almost compelled to take down more than he wants in order to make it quite clear what he does want.

Wherever quotations, in the form of a phrase, motto, proverb, lines of poetry etc., are used by way of illustration of other matter in the speech, special pains should be taken to get them accurately, because in such a case they can hardly be omitted without injury to the speech in the report: and the more ready the reporter is to deal accurately with such matters, the more he will gain in reputation.

There is a special reason for the reporter being well informed as to the more familiar quotations—whether of maxims, foreign phrases, fables, lines of poetry, etc.—and that is that it very frequently happens that a speaker, himself does not get his quotations accu

rately. It is true that the reporter in such a case is placed in a quandary. If he knows what is the right form of the quotation, should he report a speaker verbatim where he misquotes, or should he amend the speech in order to correct what he knows to be wrong? This is a question which admits of a simple and sufficient answer. The careless speaker may or may not deserve to have the error reported, but if the reporter does so, in nine cases out of ten the readers of the paper who notice it will attribute the blunder to the reporter and not to the speaker. Unless, therefore, the speaker obviously distorts a quotation to serve a temporary purpose, the reporter should, for the sake of his own reputation, give what he knows to be the correct form. The same rule holds good as to any obvious slip. A notable instance of the discretion exercised by pressmen occurred in a speech by the Prince of Wales, on the occasion of the Royal Show at Cambridge in 1894. His Royal Highness, in his speech, referred to the date of the previous show at Cambridge, and spoke of the event as being before he was born, when as a matter of fact it was three years afterwards. To have reported the Prince's speech verbatim would have conveyed the impression that His Royal Highness did not know the date of his own birth.

Poetical quotations, if to be reproduced, should be taken down with particular care, and, if necessary, a vowel inserted here and there. If, then, the reporter finds in the transcription of his notes that the lines will not "scan," and he cannot lay his hands upon the original, it is better to leave them out altogether than to attempt a paraphrase. (*Ibid*).

### **The feeling of a public Meeting should be faithfully represented.**

Though not a part of the speech to be reported, expressions of approval or dissent form an important element in the proceedings of meetings, such as those held at election times, and upon other occasions when subjects of exciting interest come up for consideration. Of the ordinary forms of approval, the word "cheers" is most

fittingly applied for personal compliment to the speaker, "hear, hear" to indicate approval of the opinions expressed, and "applause" for the skill with which those opinions are supported. "Cheers" and "loud cheers" are, however, frequently used, both for personal compliment and recognition of merit in speaking. Expressions of dissent as "oh," "no, no," etc., are recorded as they are uttered. The reporter should make a fair and judicious use of such terms, not making "applause" out of the slightest "hear, hear," nor allow the solitary dissentient to appear as the voice of the meeting; still less should he ever be betrayed into joining audibly or otherwise in approval or disapproval of a speaker. He is there, not to approve or disapprove, but to report fairly what happens, and record expressions of approval or dissent, so as to give a fair index of the feeling of the meeting

Besides the element of fairness in the use of them, there is not unfrequently a picturesque side to these expressions from the audience which makes the reports interesting reading. If the meeting is of what is sometimes described as a "lively" character, or if there is a hostile element, as at shareholders' meetings occasionally, the reporter will have enough to do to preserve and reproduce what happens. Piquant, humorous, or satirical interjections from someone in the audience should invariably be recorded, because it will often happen that they will for a time entirely change the current of a speech, and without them a great deal of what is called forth by them would, of course, lose its meaning. (*Ibid*).

## **Condensation of Speeches is the crucial test of a Reporter.**

The number and varied character of public meetings—political, social and religious—which the reporter is called upon to attend, make it impossible that he should do more than report the speeches in a more or less condensed form, and here comes in a crucial test of a reporter's fitness, and an opportunity for his first piece of editorial training. It is a common experience for a meeting occupying nearly a couple of hours, to be reported in a column, or from one to

two columns. The speeches themselves would run to five or six columns in the time, and so to the reporter belongs the task of securing the "survival of the fittest." To condense a speech from a column to three-quarters or two-thirds of a column is easy, and, in most cases, may be accomplished by the negative process of striking out repetitions and obviously weak points; but to condense the same speech to less than half-a-column is not so easy, and calls for the positive process of looking for the good "points." In reporting an ordinary meeting with three or four speakers and a chairman, the junior, who has not yet acquired that rarest of all reporting faculties, the sense of proportion and the fitness of things, is always in danger of spoiling his report by condensing some part of the *meeting*, instead of the *speeches*,—that is, by writing enough of the chairman and the first speaker to fill the space allotted to him, and then have to wind up with the lame intimation that "Messrs. Smith and Jones afterwards addressed the meeting." In an ordinary meeting with a chairman, a principal speaker, and two or three secondary speakers to support him, of which about a column and a half is required, a fair proportion would be to give a quarter of a column to the introduction and chairman, letters, etc., three-quarters of a column for the chief speaker, and half a column for the remaining speakers. A very short speech from the chairman, would, of course, allow more space for the others. It is impossible to adopt any rule for all cases, but it is better to have an eye to proportion at the outset, because it saves the risk of unfairness to individual speakers, and is, moreover, a fundamental part of the art of condensing. The two chief points to be remembered in condensed reporting are (1) endeavouring to understand the speaker, and (2) be rather sparing in the use of the note-book. The first is often of more importance than recording the actual words of the speaker, and the second will save the unnecessary labour of wading through one-and-a-half columns of notes for half column of a speech, which, with other engagements pressing, can only bring personal discomfort and an unsatisfactory *résumé* after all. For the junior reporter, however, who is not yet master of the art of rapidly seizing the good points of a speech as they are uttered, some latitude should be allowed. If



have seen it seriously recommended that the reporter should always "write up" a condensed report as the speaker proceeds—by the dual process of writing out notes already taken, while he keeps his ear open for, and jots down in his note-book, any good points of the speech being delivered. Many experienced pressmen do this with advantage; on a daily paper it is absolutely necessary, and on a weekly if a few hours before going to press, or when other engagements follow closely after. But where these conditions are absent, I should not be inclined to recommend it to the junior until he can feel his way a little, simply because in nine cases out of ten he cannot do it. The young reporter should, of course, be alert, and may very well write up his introduction, etc., while the audience and speakers are taking their places, but unless he is pressed for "copy" he will find an advantage, and the possibility of gaining experience necessary for the dual process later on, in taking notes, not of all that is said, but of rather more of the best of what is said, than he may actually require. Facility in dealing with a mass of shorthand notes is the first educational process for the young note-taker, and the judgment necessary to avoid taking more notes than are actually required, will come with experience. (*Ibid*).

### **Speeches indiscriminately reported in third person apt to result in awkward readings.**

All speeches not actually reported verbatim are usually reported in the third person and past tense. Thus a speaker who commences with—"It is with great pleasure that I am able to take part in this meeting," would be reported—"it was with great pleasure that he was able to take part in that meeting," etc. This practice sometimes becomes a little awkward when the speaker refers to someone else. Thus—"Carlyle has said that most men are fools, but I do not think," etc.—would be reported as "Carlyle had said that most men are fools, but he (the speaker) did not think," etc. At best, this kind of thing is a necessary evil, and at worst it is apt to result in awkward readings. The young reporter should notice the methods of dealing with "person and tenses," in good class

papers, and vary the phraseology so as to avoid a too frequent use of such apologetic forms, or anything which would make the meaning ambiguous for the reader.

Whether a speech as a whole should appear in the first person will depend upon the position and importance of the speaker and the speech, whether the report is to be practically a verbatim report, and also upon the guidance which the reporter may receive from his chief, or from the custom of the paper. In the great majority of cases it will be the third person ; but where it seems desirable that the personality of the speaker should have prominence, or where a short explanatory speech is interposed, or a question asked, the first person is best, and the same may be said of a cross examination in important cases in the law courts. But the reporter should be warned against the loose practice, sometimes observed by the amateur correspondent, of frequently changing third to first person, and back again. If any part of a speech should justify a change it should be well marked, and the reversion to the third person indicated by some such phrase as "continuing his address the speaker said," etc. (*Ibid*).

## **Reporters should not be guilty of misrepresentation or of making Capital out of public meetings.**

The reporter's work should, as far as it goes, always be fair to the speakers. If he is on the staff of a party paper, that may influence the prominence given to, or the length of his report of meetings in support of the respective parties, but it should never cause the reporter to misrepresent, or seek to make party capital out of a meeting ; nor should he, in reporting speeches upon any subject which he or his own paper may favour, add such gratuitous assurances as that "the speaker conclusively proved that his opponents were wrong," or "demolished the arguments of his opponent." If the speaker did this, the report and the intelligence of the reader should be sufficient to show it. All bias in favour of this or that view should be left to the editorial columns ; the reporter's business is to bring home the materials upon which judgment may be formed and he should do it with judicial fairness.

There is, I know, a phase of the "new journalism" in which the journalist is allowed to shake off these trammels, and, having a sort of roving commission to make spicy reading in favour of the cause his paper is taking up, or against "the other side," he turns out "copy" accordingly. This, however, where it does occur, is rather outside the ordinary run of reporting work to which the foregoing remarks have reference. (*Ibid.*)

## **Reporters should observe the ethical and honourable traditions of the British Press.**

In the ethics of Journalism an all important element is that which governs the relationship of the journalist to those who may be affected by what he writes. Unfair or partizan tactics in reporting will sometimes bring upon the reporter, who has served a party paper with too much zeal, an unpleasant retaliation. At election times, for instance, he may find himself requested to retire from a semi-public meeting when the representatives of other papers are allowed to remain. It may be a mistake on the part of the promoters of a meeting to resort to such tactics; I think it is, but the reporter should not, by any act of his own, lay himself open to such invidious treatment. Then it is, and should be, the proud boast of the English press that it cannot be bribed, and yet there are people who do not understand the principles upon which a public journal is conducted, and who will not hesitate to hold out a consideration in order to escape from the consequences of their own acts in the matter of publicity. The young journalist should, of course, set his face against any such advances as an insult to the honourable traditions of the English Press. At the same time, this can always be done without being personally offensive or without loss of dignity, and still less any threat to "make it worse" for such persons in the report. The reporter should do his work with a single eye to what is due to his employers and to the public, and put aside his own personal feelings. The offer of a bribe to keep a name out of the paper, which is now a comparatively rare occurrence, has been more often made through ignorance of what is customary than from any desire to corrupt the youthful reporter. (*Ibid.*)

## APPENDIX A.

### Scandalous Reporting of Meetings of Joint Stock Companies.

MR. WILLIAM HENRY MURRAY, sub-editor of the *Financial Times*, desposed that on October 15, 1895, he received from Mr. Skinner, advertising agent, a report of the statutory meeting of the Lydenburg Consolidated Mines Company, and the same was published in the *Financial Times* as an advertisement, for which £7-12s. was charged. The copy was received from Mr. Skinner as coming from the secretary of the company. Mr. Skinner, advertising agent, stated that he received instructions for the insertion of the report from Lupton, who paid him the charge for insertion. (*See report of Lupton proceedings.*)

There is a payment of 200 guineas to the *Financial News*; what would that be for?—I wanted an absolutely verbatim report of the Schweppe meeting, and they agreed to publish such a verbatim report of the whole meeting specially for 100 guineas. That was the first meeting. I asked them to give me another verbatim report of the second meeting. I gave them 100 guineas for each meeting. (*Vide report of Hooley's examination.*)

Within the space of a few days the public has had these instructive commentaries on the methods of reporting company meetings. At the inception of the weekly issue of the *Investor's Review* we were careful to mention that it was not our intention to fill our journal with meetings paid for at so much per column, observing at the same time that their insertion was, to our mind, in the main nothing more or less than a covert bribe, and destroyed the perfect independence of the paper. We have seen no reason to modify our opinion; on the contrary, our resolution has been considerably strengthened the more we learn of the degrading associations connected with this so-called business. The

Lupton and Hooley revelations furnish innumerable texts for the moralist, and certainly the public through these scandals has had some light thrown on the inwardness of those company meeting reports, which in these latter days occupy an abnormal space in the financial journals and the payment for which forms a considerable part of their revenue—in some cases practically the whole.

We are glad that from the witness-box at the Law Courts the admission has been made by a responsible financial journalist that these reports are to be looked upon as advertisements. We always considered them as such when not in the category of bribes, but have often been surprised that the conductors of respectable journals should allow these “advertisements” to masquerade in the editorial columns. Notwithstanding this admission, made in circumstances more or less compulsory, hundreds of investors scattered throughout the country still look upon these full reports, often set out with a glamour of big type and sub-heads, as in some way receiving the special approval, if not the blessing, of the editorial department. The very essence of an advertisement is that it should be drawn up by, and express the views of the advertiser. Much of the lying contained in ordinary advertisements is deprived of its mischief by the full knowledge that the statements are highly coloured, and that the truth, to say the least, is handled somewhat carelessly. Having had the admission that these meetings are advertisements, it must now be recognised that, as such, they are subject to “editing,” that unpleasant remarks are sometimes deleted, and damaging criticisms suppressed. There is no other inference. We wish that those editors who desire to retain their well-deserved reputation for honest journalism would have the candour to place “adv’t.” to these reports, or in some way signify that they were to be treated by the public as matter the insertion of which is charged for.

The principle of the whole thing, as at present conducted, is rotten, and in practice is much more so than it may appear in

theory. As now worked, there is no branch of financial journalism more degrading than this business of reporting meetings paid for practically at so much per line. To witness representatives of various journals brazenly plying the secretaries or chairmen of companies at the close of a meeting for an "order to report" is deplorable, if not disgraceful. Ofttimes a score of these canvassers—some of them occasionally having the impudence and the dishonesty to vote for, and shout on behalf of, the board during the progress of the meeting—are every day to be seen at company meetings forming a *queue*, waiting in turn for an interview, the secretary bartering with, and sometimes badgering, the canvasser as to the figure he (the official) is to mark on their cards, or fill in on a recognised printed form. "A full report for a guinea, with an editorial," has more than once been the magnificent offer.

When the meeting has been particularly unpleasant, the revelations of a serious character, overtures by the promise of a guinea *for themselves*—"we don't want it reported," remarks some official—are made to the canvassers and reporters to suppress the report altogether. In some cases the bribe is readily taken, and with the desired effect. Journalists of the old type—and there are those who still retain some self-respect—look upon this canvassing and reporting with the utmost disgust. "Blow-flies" is the phrase by which these journalists class the financial City canvasser and reporter.

The evils attending the system, which has invaded even some of the great political journals—oh, the pity of it!—are serious and far-reaching. It would surprise many to learn how large is the sum spent by companies in this wasteful and useless manner. Revenues varying from £ 200 to somewhere between £ 5,000 and £ 8,000 are netted by financial journals by this non-moral, if not immoral, procedure. The amounts, of course, never figure in the balance-sheets of the companies, but are discreetly covered up in some general item, such as "printing advertisements, circulars, &c." "These reports are not a bit of good to us,"

secretaries have been heard to mutter, but frequently they are afraid to refuse the tout. Secretaries could tell many an unpleasant tale of deliberate blackmail in connection with this degrading work. Some have had the courage to stand out against the evil principle; but before very long the journal so slighted has given evidence of its great displeasure; some of these papers taking delight in placing a sandwich man with a flaring poster adverse to the company outside its offices. There cannot possibly be any reason for much of this shameful expenditure except that the order to report is given as a bribe to silence criticism, to obtain a favourable notice, or, in Mr. Hooley's phrase, for permission "to be let alone."

We have of late seen notable instances of the manner in which these long company reports are used by unscrupulous promoters, and by means of which worthless shares are unloaded on the innocent public. Hundreds of pounds have been spent in this manner on a single meeting. Even some of the Fleet-street journals are being nobbled to report the proceedings of company meetings at 2s. 6d. a line, including the cheers and hurrahs, putting on record such memorable facts as that the followers of the chairman shouted lustily, and sang "For he's a jelly good fellow." Apart from the morality of the question, we cannot understand a journal with a reputation to lose giving up its valuable space to these columns of costly nonsense. At a recent meeting, the chairman having spoken two or three columns, his remarks being reported *verbatim et literatim*, not a "Hear, hear" omitted. (his friends take care that these are pretty plentiful.) A shareholder—bold man!—ventured to ask three or four questions, very pertinent questions they seemed to us. The next morning these questions were discreetly omitted from what we must consider the official newspaper report—the reply of the chairman, of course, being given *in extenso*. A clever reply it was, but without having the questions before one it is impossible to estimate the relevancy of the answer, or its honesty. Hear is a recent instance in point of garbled reporting—one amongst

hundreds that we could bring to the notice of our readers. The extract refers to the recent meeting of the London and West Australian Investment Company. One extract is taken from the report of a paper of the highest standing, which endeavours to place on record an impartial account of the proceedings; the other is from a journal which, it seems to us, frequently signally fails in this respect. The deadly parallel tells its own tale:—

A lengthy discussion followed, in course of which several shareholders freely criticised the management of the company as well as the accounts submitted, and it was suggested that the directors should forego their remuneration until such time as the company stood on a better footing.

The chairman, in reply, said that the directors were prepared to accept £ 1,000, in place of £ 1,500, as their remuneration for the current year.

The motion for the adoption of the report and account was then put to the meeting and declared to be carried, though this decision was strongly challenged by several of the shareholders present.

After some altercation, the retiring director, Colonel R. Parry Nisbet, was declared re-elected, and the auditors, Messrs. Monkhouse, Stoneham, and Company, were re-appointed. A proposal

Some discussion ensued, in which Messrs. Langmead, Lewis, Ziffo, Rait and Fuller took part.

The chairman, in replying said that the directors were prepared to accept £ 1,000 in place of £ 1,500, as their remuneration for the current year.

The motion was then put to the meeting and carried.

The retiring director, Colonel R. Parry Nisbet, was re-elected, and the auditors, Messrs. Monkhouse, Stoneham, and Company, were re-appointed.



to take a count of the shareholders. A vote of thanks to the chairman closed the proceedings. The report and accounts were ignored by the chairman and the meeting closed in some confusion.

We do not so much blame the reporters. They are merely tools, and many of them find it a lucrative business. Some of them are men of considerable financial knowledge, and otherwise estimable gentlemen. But in view of the circumstances in which they are commissioned to report, is it not too much to expect that their transcript will be of that impartial kind which one expects to find in the report of a trained journalist who is not a paid retainer of the company, for that is what the system amounts to? The reporter of these paid meetings is accorded so much space, according to the fee arranged upon, and woe betide him if he exceeds by a few "sticks" his allotted quantity. Of course, the chairman, frequently with his prepared printed speech, is given the lion's share of the space—sometimes nine-tenths of the quantity—even if he has not spoken ten sentences of intelligent relevant matter; but the remarks of the poor proprietor, particularly if his criticisms are scathing, are altogether immolated, or reported in such a fashion that, by reason of the extreme brevity and the toning down of his phrases, insult is added to injury. These garbled reports lull the absent shareholders into a false security, and mischief of all kinds follows. Apart from these lesser evils, the important aspect remains that the payments are really bribes, except where they have not been extracted as blackmail. We are glad to know that in one or two exceptional instances the bribe does not operate; but no one who lives in the world of finance, and takes the trouble to scan the papers in which these paid reports appear, will fail to come to the conclusion that they act as a gag and frequently call forth an editorial puff.

There is a significant, if amusing, formula current among these canvassers. Meeting one another in the neighbourhood of

Winchester House, or the Cannonstreet Hotel—where shareholders most do congregate—they will say, one to the other : “How’s business? Such and such a company is no good.” Of course, this self-constituted financial authority does not mean that it fails to pay dividends, that it has not a fine nest-egg in the way of a substantial reserve. Bless your soul ! he could not tell the difference between a debenture and a deferred share, and thinks “reserve fund” and “sinking fund” are convertible terms. “No good,” to his mind, simply means that the company is so sound, so respectable, that his application for an order to report would be as useless as if he applied to the Secretary of the Bank of England. “There will be business,” is said of the approaching meeting of a rotten company where it is expected criticism will be much in evidence. “Where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered to gether.”

To revert for a moment to the texts upon which we have framed these general remarks. How humiliating for an editor to discover that he has allowed, for the sake of a paltry five guineas, a meeting of the nature of the Lupton statutory gathering to find lodgment in his columns ! We wonder in how many papers this precious report found insertion at the customary price. To pay 100 guineas, too, for the report of a single meeting ! Even at seven guineas a column—the highest normal price, we believe, for these delightful reports, which form such interesting matter for the general reader—the meeting must have been of an outrageous length. No ; it could not have panned out to the figure mentioned by Mr. Hooley, and, if his statement is correct—it is one of these which have not been contradicted, and not many of his allegations have been allowed to pass unchallenged—we must presume that his memory on this point has served him well and that the two 100 guineas are some more of his fancy payments. A meeting must be exceptionally long to work out at the ordinary prices ruling for reports or transcripts at more than twenty or thirty guineas.

Finally, we would remark that if paid meetings are inserted in the body of a paper, it should be clearly stated that they do not even tacitly receive the approval of the editor. Better still if secretaries of honest companies, as in some instances, would have a *verbatim* note printed and sent out to their shareholders. This would give legitimate and profitable work to skilled short-hand writers, and there are many who would gladly undertake this honest work. By the way, we should like to express our indebtedness to the excellent and undoubtedly honest reports which have appeared in the *Times* for many years past. The City representative of the *Times* who has been responsible for these meetings for the past twenty years or more is highly respected, and he has done his work so well that the *Times* reports in many City houses are looked upon in a semi-official manner, its representative having earned, and deservedly so, a reputation for accuracy, excellent judgment, and, above all, impartiality. (*Investor's Review*, September 1898.)

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